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The story of the
English separatists.

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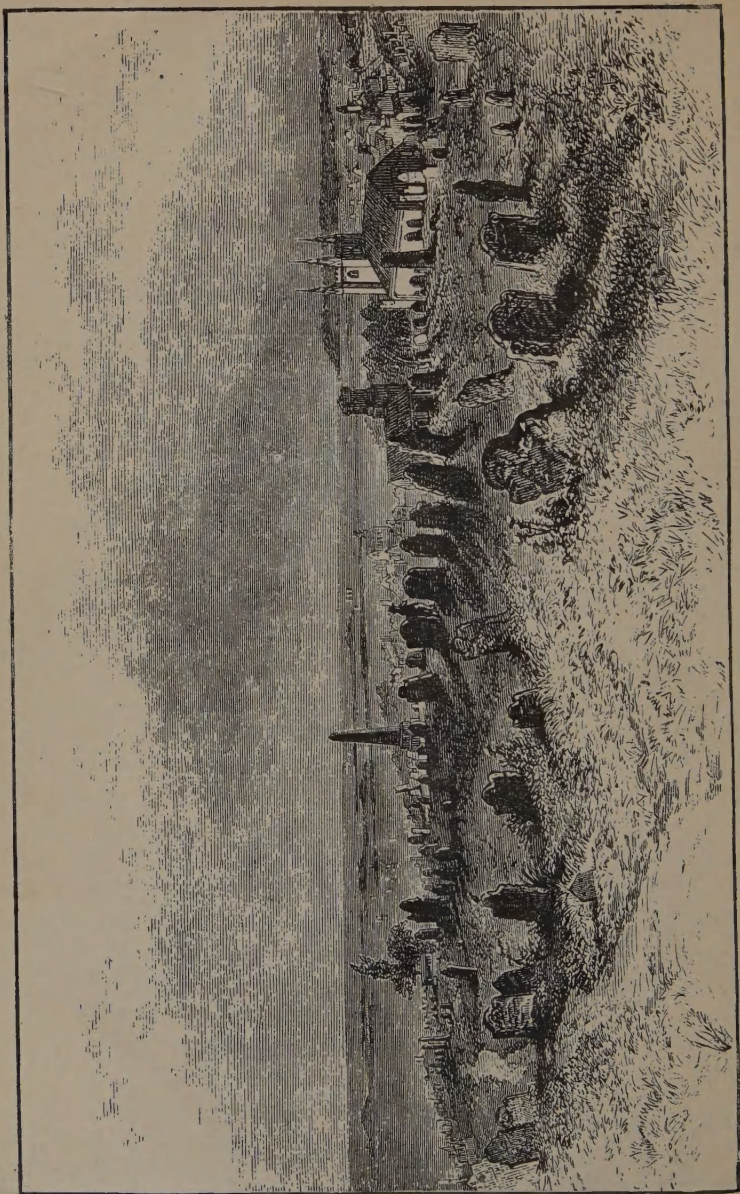
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THE STORY OF THE ENGLISH SEPARATISTS



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THE STORY
OF THE
ENGLISH SEPARATISTS;

WRITTEN TO COMMEMORATE THE
TERCENTENARY OF THE MARTYRDOM
OF
GREENWOOD, BARROWE, AND PENRY
IN 1593;

BY
ALEXANDER MACKENNAL, B.A., D.D.

(SECOND EDITION)

LONDON :
Congregational Union of England and Wales,
MEMORIAL HALL, FARRINGTON STREET.

1901.

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UNWIN BROTHERS, THE GRESHAM PRESS, WOKING AND LONDON.

TO
THE YOUNG PEOPLE
OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS
THIS STORY
OF THEIR HEROIC FOREFATHERS
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY ONE WHO CHERISHES THE CONFIDENCE
THAT THEY WILL BE WORTHY OF THEIR SIRE.

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Preface.



THIS little book is simply what its title declares it to be—a “Story of the English Separatists.” It has not the fulness of a history, nor the minuteness of a monograph. Its aim is to set out the incidents of Separatism as they occurred ; and to trace the development of its leading idea from its negative form as a protest against the attempt to suppress the Reformation to its positive form as an assertion that Congregationalism was the church order delivered by Christ and the apostles. The purpose of the book is not polemical, but descriptive ; it seeks to delineate the movement as it appeared to its authors rather than to enter into its controversial details.

Short as is the period here ascribed to English Separatism under that distinctive title, there is abundant material for the historic illustration of it. The Congregational Union has never been indifferent to the subject. In 1839, Mr. Hanbury prepared, at the request of the Committee of the Union, his “Historical Memorials relating to the Independents” ; and in 1851, under the editorship of the Rev. Robert Ashton, the “Works of John

Robinson, the Pilgrim Father," were published, also at the instance of the Union. Both works were well done, and are of permanent value. Mr. Hanbury's book is full of quotations from contemporary sources, with accurate references, so that it is a pleasure to pursue the subject having his guidance. Since that time, the national libraries have been made available to all students ; and the manuscript treasures, especially in the State Papers Office, have been calendered ; readers will find no difficulty in referring to contemporary publications and documents. There has been, moreover, a revival of church sentiment and an interest in the doctrine of the church, in which Congregationalists have shared ; and which makes the study of these sources a task full of interest. In no way can we get so near the men of the sixteenth century as by reading their own writings ; the toil of deciphering old manuscripts and mastering old arguments is nothing in comparison with the pleasure we have when we find the image of living persons impressing itself on our minds.

Among recent writers three cannot be passed over here—Dr. Waddington, whose five volumes of "Congregational History" and smaller works are a storehouse of materials, badly arranged, quoted inaccurately, and with insufficient reference-marks, but nevertheless materials largely of his own gathering and of the highest value ; Dr. Dexter, whose "Collections toward a Bibliography of Congregationalism" win for him the gratitude of every student, while his Lectures are graphic and eminently readable ; and Dr. Leonard Bacon, whose "Genesis of the New England Churches" reveals scholarship and a literary touch of no ordinary force and delicacy. The student will exercise his own judgment on the expressed opinions of these authors ; but he cannot safely neglect any page which they have written. Professor Arber, too, has laid us under obligation for his edition of Marprelate tracts, with his introduction to the controversy ;

and for his reprint of Prince's "Chronological History of New England." It is much to be desired that he will complete the scheme of publication of works bearing on early Nonconformist history announced in his catalogue.

It is with the object of stimulating young students to take up this subject for thorough investigation that the formal arrangement of this little book has been adopted. The apparatus of notes may strike some persons as too ambitious for so slight a work; it is intended to guide beginners until they are fairly entered upon their task, when they will make their way for themselves. Though I have made a good deal of use of the sources, I have given references whenever I could to the modern books in which they are quoted; because these books will be, at first, more attainable. I have always had some special reason for giving a reference to the source, in addition to, or instead of, a reference to the quotation of it in a modern volume. I have also had some special reason for adhering, in a few cases, to the primitive spelling; for the most part I have given modern orthography.

Should this book induce advocates of opposing church theories to make an independent study of Separatist literature, so much the better. Controversy is abated, not inflamed, in its intensity, through a fuller understanding of one another by the controversialists. I believe that Presbyterians and Congregationalists, particularly, the modern representatives of Puritans and Separatists, will learn, by reference to the sixteenth century, that their controversy has nearly worn itself out; and that Robinson's prediction, that they would come to find themselves in substantial agreement, is on the eve of fulfilment in the New England on both sides of the Atlantic. *Iræ amantium redintegratio amoris.*

I have not entered into the Baptist controversy in Amsterdam, nor touched on the assertion that Penry was a Baptist. It is idle to regret that the difference of opinion arose. Only by the

full assertion of points of difference can ultimate unity be attained. It must be borne in mind that the Baptists, equally with the Independents, are sharers in the Congregational succession.

This book has been prepared at the request of the Committee of the Congregational Union, and is published by the Union. The author, however, assumes full personal responsibility for every sentence it contains. It gives me great pleasure to find myself in accord with Dr. John Brown on two important points where the opinions of Congregational authorities differ—the authorship of the Marprelate tracts; and the relation of the separate churches under Elizabeth to the secret churches under Mary.

PREFATORY NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

A VERY few alterations have been made in this Edition for the sake of accuracy. Substantially the Book is the same as originally issued. A correction in the note on page 69 reached the printers after the sheet was pulled. Instead of “assumption by the powers of ecclesiastical civil authority,” read “assumption by the civil powers of ecclesiastical authority.”

BOWDON, CHESHIRE,
June, 1901.



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Copy of resolution passed unanimously by the Congregational Union, at Bradford, on Tuesday, October 11, 1892.

“That this Assembly, inviting the churches of the Congregational Order in England and Wales to commemorate the martyrdoms of Henry Barrowe, John Greenwood, and John Penry, who were put to death in London, in the year of our Lord 1593, for the Word of God and the testimony of the Gospel, first renders solemn thanks to God for the grace vouchsafed to these His servants. This assembly would make special mention of the clearness with which they saw that the will of the Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, is the supreme law for the government of His Church, and that the interpretation of that will is ever to be sought in the conscience and judgment of His faithful disciples in their gatherings; the boldness with which they testified that a Christian Church is an assembly of Christian persons and no others; their unshaken loyalty to the Crown and civil government in all civil causes, their meek endurance of the penalties imposed on them for their fidelity to the truths revealed to them; and their strong abiding confidence that these truths would one day be commonly recognised. The Assembly avows its conviction that the freedom of worship and self-government, now prized by the Churches generally in these realms, is largely the result of the fidelity of the sixteenth century confessors and their fellow separatists.

That the Assembly earnestly recommends the members of the churches, whose responsibility and privilege it is to set forth the truths for which these men died, to acquaint themselves and their children with this heroic history, so that the Congregationalists of to day may be faithful to their heritage, and sharers of the grace so richly bestowed by God upon their fathers.

That the Assembly adopts the report now presented to it, and instructs the Committee of the Congregational Union to proceed with the preparation of literature and lectures in the way indicated.”



TYBURN AS IT WAS.



TYBURN AS IT IS.



CHAPTER I.

THE SUPPRESSED REFORMATION.

IN the year of our Lord 1582, the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, there were printed at Middleburgh, in Zeeland, two editions of a pamphlet, bearing the lengthy title—"A booke which sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians, and howe unlike they are unto Turkes and Papistes and Heathen folke. Also the pointes and partes of all divinitie, that is of the revealed will and worde of God, are declared by their severall definitions and divisions in order as followeth. Also there goeth a Treatise before of Reformation without tarrying for anie, and of the wickednesse of those Preachers, which will not reforme themselves and their charge, because they will tarie till the Magistrate commaunde and compell them." From Middleburgh copies were smuggled into England; the next year these and some other books of the same press were denounced by Royal Proclamation, and for circulating them two men were hanged at Bury St. Edmunds.

The author of the pamphlet was Robert Browne, from whom was derived the nickname "Brownists," which for a long time was given to those whom to day we call Congregationalists, and

which some persons now living remember to have been occasionally used of Independents in remote country towns. Browne was a man of most unhappy temper ; turbulent, vacillating, self-willed. After keeping his terms at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, he began to preach ; refusing, however, to accept the bishop's license. He was frequently imprisoned for his reforming zeal, and would have been more severely punished but for the intercession of his kinsman, Lord Burghley. He gathered a separate congregation in Norwich, retired to Middleburgh, thence crossed to Scotland, and was back again in 1585, at his father's house, at Tolethorpe, Rutlandshire. After being excommunicated by the Bishop of Peterborough, he conformed to the Church of England, becoming master of St. Olave's Grammar School, Southwark, and subsequently rector of Achurch cum Thorpe, in Northamptonshire. He died, over eighty years old, in Northampton jail, where he had been committed for striking a constable and insulting the justice before whom he was cited. The still graver charge of wife-beating has been brought against him. Neither his friends nor his opponents found any satisfaction in Browne. He wronged the Separatists by giving them his name ; he injured the Church of England by returning to it. Those who take a charitable view of the man suggest the plea of partial insanity in accounting for his conduct.

Browne, however, had one excellent gift : his intellect was singularly lucid, and he could clothe his thoughts in clear and noble English. The first definition of the "booke which sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians," is this—"Christians are a company or number of believers which, by a willing covenant made with their God, are under the government of God and Christ, and keep His laws in one holy communion : because they are redeemed by Christ unto holiness and happiness for ever, from which they were fallen by the sin of Adam." From this statement of the relation between the Church and the Christian—

each necessarily involving the other—follow certain corollaries, such as purity of church fellowship, the self-government under Christ of each particular church, the impossibility of advancing the Christian religion by force or favour, the absolute necessity of discipline within the church, the equally absolute necessity of toleration without it. On these and other points which Congregationalists have felt the obligation of maintaining, Browne has spoken with an elevation and a force which make students prize his writings even more than they dislike the man. Chief among his contentions was that of the duty incumbent upon “all true Christians” to separate from the parish assemblies, where no shew of discipline was observed, and whose general reformation it was hopeless to look for. In nothing does Browne’s lucidity appear more strikingly than in the title of his “treatise on Reformation without tarrying for any.” Separatism had its origin in the determination of some preachers who had waited vainly until the magistrate should “command and compel Reformation” to proceed with the reformation of “themselves and their charges.”

The English Reformation is commonly spoken of as an event which happened in the reign of Henry VIII. That event was, however, only an incident—an exceedingly important, a critical incident—in a struggle which had been going on for centuries before, and which has been continued to our own day. The struggle had two aspects; one was political—it was an effort to free the English nation from the government of the court of Rome; the other was religious—the endeavour to purge Christianity from the corruptions in which its doctrine and discipline had become entangled. The first object was fully achieved under Henry VIII. It was the glory of his reign that it was then established, not only as a principle, but as a fact, that “the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England.” The

second object was not achieved ; it was not even seriously attempted. Henry had no heart for the work ; he had no sympathy with it. He was clerically educated ; he had at one time taken great interest in the scholastic Catholic doctrines, and never escaped from their influence.

English Protestants are ashamed of the Reformation under Henry, because it is bound up with the painful story of Catherine's divorce. We need not seek to extenuate the shame of the incident ; it debased the King, and degraded the conscience of his advisers. But no incident could have brought out more clearly the relation of the Canon law to moral law, and the influence of the Papacy on national well-being. On various pretences — family affinity, prior betrothal, ecclesiastical association—Rome had prohibited a large number of marriages unobjectionable on moral and social grounds. On the other hand, the Pope claimed the power to dispense, not only from those prohibitions which rested only on papal authority, but also from those which rest on moral propriety and social order. If the severance of England from the Roman communion is bound up with the scandal of a broken marriage contract, it was because Rome had brought Christendom to believe that the sanctity of marriage was not so rooted in nature and morality that it could not be disturbed ; that this was a matter to be settled by canonical lawyers and large fees at the Papal court. The dallying of Clement VII. with this question stirred Henry's indignation ; what Henry would have done had the Pope declared the marriage to be indissoluble can be only matter of speculation ; but it might have been foreseen that the Court of England would resent the treatment of an English matter as one of Roman policy, to be determined by the relations of the Papacy to France on the one hand, and Spain on the other. The Papal court may have had a deep design in its hesitancy. Old conflicts for supremacy between the kings of England and the see of Rome had shewn

how hard it was to humble a king with an unquestioned title and an undivided people. The Pope would gladly have seen no offspring to Henry but a daughter, whose legitimacy was doubtful, and a bastard son ; to be able to hold over a proud people the fear of a disputed succession would be to constitute Rome the arbiter of English history ; to keep the too free spirit of England in check. But the situation was miscalculated. Of all national questions the succession to the throne was that which English statesmen were least inclined to leave unsettled. Only one reign separated them from the desolating Wars of the Roses ; and to guard against a similar strife was the first duty of the Royal Council. The inconvenience, the danger of separation from Rome was deliberately judged preferable to the disasters which would follow if Henry died without heirs whose legitimacy the nation would not question. The political issue, once joined, could only have one solution ; the assertion of the Royal supremacy in all national causes.

But if the Pope miscalculated the political temper and purpose of the English people, equally did Henry under-estimate the forces working for an enlarged Protestantism to which his action was making appeal. Reformation of religion was in the air. Henry carefully studied the Lutheran movement in Germany ; in his own country there was a Protestant purpose striving to utter itself, more thorough than that of Germany, as Wyclif's teaching had been more drastic than Luther's. The influence of Wyclif on Continental Reformation, through Huss and Bohemian Protestantism, has been recognised by the European historians ; his permanent influence on English religious life is illustrated by two maps in Mr. Beckett's "*English Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*." * The counties over which the influence of Lollardy extended were almost exactly the counties in

* "*The English Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*." By W. H. Beckett. London : Religious Tract Society.

which martyrs suffered under Mary ; it may be added, they were the counties where Puritanism was subsequently strong ; the Home counties, with Suffolk and Norfolk, where the martyr-roll is most crowded, are the counties where Separatism had its origin.

But for this Protestant feeling, existing before Henry was a Reformer, it may be doubted if he could have broken the yoke of Rome. Monarchs as proud as he, and with a nobler purpose than his, had bent before the Papacy, because their people could not endure interdict and excommunication. If we ask how the bulls and censures of the Papal court were powerless against Henry, there are many answers to be given. But they all involve one fact, the most significant of all ; the people had outgrown them. Such terrors become weaker as they are employed. The very discussion of them invalidates them. John Purvey, a follower of Wyclif, had said, a century and a half before, "If the Pope shall interdict this our realm ; that cannot hurt us, but much profit us, because that thereby he should separate us from all his wicked laws, and from the charges of sustaining of so many thousand shavelings, which, with small devotion, or none at all, patter and chatter a new found song, *secundum usum Sarum*."¹ This was the temper, latent in many, but ready to be evoked, which accomplished the freedom of England ; and when evoked, it could not be repressed. An intense zeal for Church reformation was the immediate result of the breach with Rome.

Some popular outbreaks of Protestant feeling, marked by violence, and in some instances by the indecency which was an English characteristic in those days, led to the reaction which all historians have noted as speedily following the Act of Supremacy. In 1536, when Henry desired an alliance with the German princes, he personally indited some Articles of Religion. They were Lutheran in their general tendency ; they were an insufficient representation of English Protestantism, but, as Mr. Green says,

¹ Foxe. "Acts and Monuments," (1596). Vol. i. p. 502.

the "doctrinal advance" was "an immense one."¹ "The Articles expressly based the faith of the Church of England on the Bible and the three creeds." "If penance was still retained as a sacrament, baptism and the Lord's Supper were alone maintained to be sacraments with it; the doctrine of Transubstantiation which Henry stubbornly maintained differed so little from the doctrine maintained by Luther that the words of Lutheran formularies were borrowed to explain it; Confession was admitted by the Lutheran Churches as well as by the English. The veneration of saints and the doctrine of prayer to them, though still retained, was so modified as to present little difficulty even to a Lutheran." The doctrine of justification by faith was also affirmed in a Lutheran form. The Six Articles, adopted by Parliament in 1539, were distinctly reactionary. The real presence was affirmed; "after consecration," it was said, "there remained no substance of bread and wine, nor any other but the substance of Christ." The necessity of the cup to the communion of the laity was denied. The celibacy of priests was enforced. The perpetual obligation of vows of chastity was declared. Private masses were affirmed to be meet and necessary for godly consolation and benefit. Auricular confession to a priest was to be continued in the church. The penalty of death by burning was pronounced against those who should deny the first article, and persistent denial of any of the other five was to meet with the same punishment. The King, and seven of his bishops who were markedly Protestant, sought to mitigate the practical operation of the Act of the Six Articles; but the passing of it was regarded with dismay, both by Melanchthon and the German Protestants, and by the Reformation party at home. For the time the English Reformation was suppressed.

The short reigns of Edward VI. and Mary were episodes in the story of the English Reformation. Each gave a great impetus to

¹ Green. "History of the English People." Vol. ii. p. 181.

the Protestant party : Edward's reign directly by encouragement of the reforming bishops and clergy, and by the fact that they committed themselves so deeply that their retraction was impossible ; Mary's reign by the opportunity it furnished them of suffering and dying for their confession, and by the impression their fidelity made upon the people.

Elizabeth was the true successor of Henry. She was like him in personal character ; she sought to carry out his policy, the assertion of the Royal supremacy against Rome, and over the religious faith and practice of her people. The party of the Reformation were full of expectation of what would follow on her accession to the throne. She was the daughter of Anne Boleyn, who had been the patroness of the Protestant party, her very name a watchword of Protestantism. It was remembered that, at danger to her life, Elizabeth had repelled the efforts made by Mary to induce her to conform to the Romish worship. For state reasons also, to resist the intrigues of the Papacy and to thwart the designs of Spain, it was believed she must strengthen the Protestant party. These hopes were utterly disappointed. The policy which Elizabeth adopted was that of conciliating, so far as was possible, her Catholic subjects to the English Church, and making that Church politically strong rather than religiously pure. Reformation was therefore stayed ; and endeavours were continually made to enforce on the clergy a ritual whose distinctive features were borrowed from Rome. Protestantism was the popular cause, and Elizabeth was an autocrat, disdainful of the power of the people ; not without pitifulness toward individuals, but resenting the influence of popular leaders. Elizabeth, moreover, was no Protestant. So far as we can read her religious character, she seems to have been a believer in the efficacy of forms ; a separated priesthood was to her essential to religion.

The reign of Elizabeth witnessed the development of the Puritan

party, destined to play so great a part in English history. It will be convenient here to notice its connection with the earlier English Protestantism before tracing its connection with separatism.

The English Reformation was, from the beginning, a popular movement ; it was an assertion of the rights of the individual Christian, united to Christ by faith and obedience, against the claim of the priesthood to confer spiritual privileges on believers. In Wyclif's scheme of the Church, the preacher and the teacher were to take the place of the hierarchy ; the Bible was to be translated into English and put into the hands of the laity. The doctrinal controversy centred in the sacraments. The Protestants were for simplifying the ordinance of baptism ; but around the doctrine of the mass the stress of the conflict was felt. English Protestantism has always vehemently repudiated the conception of the presence of the actual body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine of the sacrament. The question of vestments was not then, and it is not now, a mere question of man-millinery ; the position and structure of the communion-table involved the question—Is this an altar whereon a priestly order are still offering a true sacrifice, or is it a family board whereat Christ's people gather in remembrance of Him ? The removal of ornaments, the destruction of rood-screens and crucifixes, and the desecration of chancels were not the rude barbarities of men indifferent to order and beauty in the sanctuary ; these things were, like the flag in a battle-field, the symbol of an intensely real conflict, the standard which rallied men who saw in it the expression of vital truth and error. The intense hostility of the Protestants to the doctrine of the mass appears in the epithet "idolatrous" with which they stigmatised the worship of the parish churches ; it is essential to remember that their protest against sacramentalism was equally a protest against sacerdotalism. If, in the administration of the ordinances, no spiritual virtue is imparted by consecration to the elements made use of, then no special virtue needs to be com-

municated by ordination to the ministrants ; if the service is "idolatrous," he who performs it is an "idolatrous priest." The early Protestants repudiated the idea of a priesthood in the Church ; they spoke of presbyters instead of priests ; they looked for the seal and essence of the Christian ministry, not in its separation to perform priestly functions, but in its moral and spiritual influence, its power to teach the truth, to directly affect the conscience and guide the life of the people. The reactionary character of the Six Articles appears in both these aspects. They were "idolatrous" in their affirmation of transubstantiation and the value of private masses. They were sacerdotal in denying the cup to the laity, in demanding the celibacy of the clergy and declaring the perpetual obligation of vows of chastity, and in continuing the practice of auricular confession. The Six Articles, abolished under Edward VI., were not enacted again under Elizabeth, but there was a reactionary influence in the Court. The Queen was opposed to a married clergy, and on one occasion insulted the wife of the Archbishop, whose hospitality she had been enjoying. Vestments were in use again. The distinctly Protestant formula, on giving the bread and wine of the communion, in the prayer-book of Edward, was changed for one consistent with the doctrine of the real presence. Above all, Elizabeth regarded preaching with disfavour, and sought to enforce a rigid conformity in the Church.

The Puritan clergy continued the protest of the Reformers against sacramentalism and sacerdotalism ; but they had come, in their study of the New Testament, their anxious conferences with one another, and their association with Continental divines, especially those of Geneva, to entertain much clearer conceptions of the rights of the laity and the relations of the ministry to the Church. The Puritan platform is laid down in six propositions, delivered to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge by the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, Thomas Cartwright.



OLD COURT, CORPUS CHRISTI, CAMBRIDGE (*College of Browne, Greenwood, and Robinson*).

"1. That the names and functions of archbishops and archdeacons ought to be abolished. 2. That the offices of the lawful ministers of the Church, viz., bishops and deacons, ought to be reduced to their apostolical institution : bishops to preach the word of God and pray, and deacons to be employed in taking care of the poor. 3. That the government of the Church ought not to be intrusted to bishops' chancellors, or the officials of archdeacons ; but every church ought to be governed by its own ministers and presbyters. 4. That ministers ought not to be at large, but every one should have the charge of a particular congregation. 5. That no man ought to solicit, or to stand as a candidate for the ministry. 6. That ministers ought not to be created by the sole authority of the bishop, but to be openly and fairly chosen by the people."¹

There was another question of prime importance at this time, in which the influence of Geneva on Puritan thought was apparent—the relation of the Church to the nation. There was a time in Geneva when, under the masterly direction of Calvin, the Church was the director of the life of the state, aiming to control the morals of the people, and calling on the magistrate to correct the people's errors in conduct and doctrine. That was the Puritan's ideal. He did not identify the nation and the church, as if the church was only the nation in its religious aspect ; but he would have been glad if he could, rationally and conscientiously, have done so. To him the term, "the English Church," had a very definite meaning ; the Church as a whole had a Divine mission to the nation as a whole, and no Reformation would be complete until this mission was recognised by Church and nation alike. There were two noble thoughts in this conception. The one was—the moral personality of the nation : the nation was not a mere aggregate of individuals, it had a common life, and of that life, as of personal life, religion was the supreme interest. The other was—the obligation of the minister to his

¹ Article Cartwright. Schaff-Herzog's "Encyclopædia." Vol. i. p. 410.

parish : their sense of the sanctity of their orders, and their experience of success in their ministry made the Puritan clergy prize very highly their position as ministers in the national Church. These were the motives—and not love of place and power—which kept them Nonconforming ministers within the Church of England. They would have used every means, including the power of invoking the civil authority, for bringing about a complete Reformation of the whole land.

They had not an easy time. On the one hand they were involved in controversial difficulties. To Cartwright's claim that the people should take part in the election of ministers, Whitgift—afterward Archbishop of Canterbury and the Queen's confidential religious adviser—replied in five statements: "First, because in the apostles' time the church was under the cross, and therefore very few in comparison was there that embraced the gospel, and commonly they kept together, or at the least met oftentimes : so that one of them was thoroughly known to another, and they themselves could best judge who among them was the fittest to teach and instruct, having always divers fit for that function. Now the church is in prosperity, and therefore the number that profeseth great, and dispersed into divers places, and in most parishes not one fit for the ministry among them, or known unto them ; so that they should call they know not whom. Secondly, in the apostles' time all or the most that were Christians were virtuous and godly, and such as did sincerely profess the word ; and therefore the election of their pastor might safely be committed to them : now the church is full of hypocrites, dissemblers, drunkards, whoremongers, &c. ; so that, if any election were committed to them, they would be sure to take one like to themselves. Thirdly, in the apostles' time all that professed Christ had knowledge, and were able to judge who were meet to be their pastor. Now the most be ignorant and without judgment in such matters. Fourthly, in the apostles' time there was in the church no

idolaters, no superstitious persons, no papists : now the church is full of papists, atheists and such like : who seeth not therefore what strange ministers we should have, if the election of them were committed to their several parishes? Fifthly, in the apostles' time there was no church established, being then no christian magistrates, and therefore the state of the church was popular : now there is christian magistrates, and a church established, and subject to rulers, &c."¹ To statements of this sort the Puritans could only answer—and it must have been a sore trial to them to make such an answer—"We are not for an unspotted church on earth, and therefore though the Church of England has many faults, we would not willingly leave it."² On the other hand, they were sorely pressed with threats and perils for their nonconformity. The records of the court of Elizabeth are full of stories illustrating the eagerness of the Queen to reduce them to submission or to expel them from their pulpits. She was only restrained by fear of alienating from the throne the many thousands of their adherents ; it needed all the influence of those about her who dreaded the abandonment of hundreds of congregations either to Popish teaching or to none at all to restrain her.

It was while the Puritans were thus fighting a losing battle, involving themselves more and more in controversies which disturbed the composure of their piety, and tended to mar their simplicity of character ; implicating themselves more and more in what they regarded as papal error, and becoming entangled in the sinuosities of court religion, that Separatism arose. The position of the Separatists appears to us Congregationalists very simple. Those zealous for the truth and for purity of church life, bent on religious Reformation, need not wait for a national movement, for decrees of council and acts of parliament. Spiritual

¹ Whitgift. Vol. i. pp. 378, 382-389. Parker Society.

² Waddington. "Congregational History, 1567-1700." p. 6.

men have but to form themselves into spiritual societies, and the pure Church of Christ is there. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." National reformation is exceedingly desirable ; protests for truth and godliness are necessary ; Christian communities may aid one another in the endeavour after simplicity of faith and obedience ; but the essence of the church does not lie in these things, is not dependent upon them. "Come ye out from among them, and separate yourselves, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The precise significance of the name "Separatist" has been variously interpreted. Some hold that it came from the teaching of these men that the church should be separate from the world ; others from their teaching that the church should be separate from the state. Some trace the name to their act of separating from the parish assemblies, as Paul withdrew the believers from the hardened and evil-speaking members of the synagogue in Ephesus, "and separated the disciples" ; others to their affirmations respecting the authority and privileges of the separate, or "particular" church. This is a matter rather of curiosity than of importance ; each of these positions involves the others ; in all these respects they were Separatists. What is to be noticed is the fundamental difference between them and the Puritans in their conception of church Reformation and the church itself. In their protest against sacerdotalism, in their nonconformity, in their theology, in type of religious character and habit of life, Puritans and Separatists were alike. They differed here. The Puritan looked on the church as a national institution ; all Englishmen who heard the word of God and accepted the sacraments were members of the English church. The Separatist affirmed that not hearing only, but believing and obeying the word, made a man a Christian ; any society of spiritual men, but only such a society, was a church of Christ.

Natural and intelligible as this conception appears to us to day, it appeared a startling and dangerous novelty to the men of Elizabeth's time. The right of Separatism is now universally acknowledged. Not only does the law permit the existence of such societies and protect them in their worship ; their claim to the title "churches" is conceded by all Protestants except the highest Anglicans. It was not so then. The idea of religious communities freely developing themselves, according to their august conception, within the nation, was contrary to the tradition of the Tudors ; to the Puritan the toleration of them appeared a denial of his fond ideal, the religious unity of the nation under the government of a constituted clergy. The Separatists were all originally Puritans ; nothing but the strongest conviction of duty could have impelled them to break with the national church. There is a substantial identity between the first Separatists and the Congregationalists of to day ; but there is a difference in the proportion given to different aspects of the truth held by them in common, and the tone and temper of their testimony. Where we speak of the right of separation they speak of the duty of separation. The preachers who will not reform themselves and their charges are "wicked." There is a striking illustration of this in the use made then and now of the two Biblical passages quoted in the last paragraph. When we would assert the sanction of Scripture for our polity, we commonly appeal to the words of Christ—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The text is occasionally met with in the early Separatist literature ; but far more commonly we have the precept—"Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." It recurs again and again, as if it was exerting the most solemn constraint upon their conscience ; and equally solemn is their continuation of the quotation—"and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters,

saith the Lord Almighty" ; as if the Fatherhood and the sonship—words so lightly uttered—could only be realised after the duty of separation had been fulfilled. The very name, "Separatist," given them as a nickname, but not repudiated by them, assumed rather as a badge of their fidelity, shews how often this passage of Scripture was on their lips.

The justification of this stern, strenuous temper is to be found in the fact, asserted by Whitgift as a reason why no further reformation could be attempted, and deplored by Cartwright and the Puritans ; the presence of ungodly and immoral men in the church. The Separatists were ready to acknowledge that not all were such ; they declare their belief that there are many "gracious and tender" souls in the parish assemblies ; some of the later Separatists even allow that here and there a parish assembly may consist mainly of such. But they were confronted with the fact that Reformation was hindered, that there was no attempt at discipline ; they saw that discipline could not begin to be until there was discrimination between those who would and those who would not acknowledge the authority of Christ. The question was more than one of polity, it had a transcendental significance ; the direct rule of Christ over his people was checked because there were so many refusing allegiance to Him. "The kingdom of Christ," says Browne, "is his office of government, whereby he useth the obedience of his people to keep his laws and commandments to their salvation and welfare." And again, "the church government is the lordship of Christ in the communion of his offices, whereby his people obey to his will and have mutual use of their graces and callings, to further their godliness and welfare. The inward obedience to the outward preaching and government of the church, with newness of life, that is the Lord's kingdom." The lofty spirituality of these definitions is what strikes a modern reader ; it was their solemn urgency which was impressed on the men whom we are consider-

ing. The communion of Christ's offices could not be in the promiscuous parish assemblies; the mutual use of their graces and callings by those who would obey his will was thwarted by the influence of those who would not. Was it so, asks Browne, again and again, that the apostles continued to preach to the unworthy? "If some desire to hear truth in a refusing city or country, they which desire must separate themselves." The first requisite to the Lord's government of his people is that they be unitedly ready to obey Him. In answer to the affirmation that the invisible church is contained within the visible as the body of the elect is contained within the company of the called, he says—"All men are called by the gospel, but only those who believe are elected." He makes the gathering of a pure church the first end of preaching the gospel, not a work postponed until the day of judgment. "Our calling and leading to happiness is this: first, God doth plant and gather his church under one kind of government; He maketh a covenant with it." "The Lord's way, sayeth the Scripture, is holy, and no polluted shall pass by it. And again it is written, That the Lord's people (he speaketh of the church) shall be all righteous, that is, no open wickedness shall so shew itself in the church that it should be incurable. For either the parties which offend shall be separate, or else they shall be reclaimed by due admonition." "If any open wickedness must needs be suffered, it is suffered in those which are none of the church, as it is written, What have I to do to judge them that are without, do ye not judge them which are within? for God judgeth them which are without."

There is another point in which the strenuousness of the early Separatists appears. They held, with some inconsistencies due to the novelty of the conception, what was afterward called the doctrine of toleration; the impossibility of forcing the conscience; the uselessness, and therefore the wickedness, of attempts to compel uniformity in faith and worship. But the tone of their

reference to this matter is utterly unlike the tone of Mr. John Stuart Mill's "Treatise on Liberty"; the jubilant individualism of the eighteenth century is equally foreign to them. They refer to the impossibility of forcing the conscience incidentally, not for the purpose of advocating freedom of opinion. Sometimes the people who are in error are sternly dismissed, in the spirit of the old prophet—"Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone"; sometimes they are alluded to with pitifulness; but for the most part the impossibility of forcing the conscience is brought in to condemn the action of those clergy who are striving to get a legal sanction for their scheme of Church Reformation, in order that it may be imposed on the whole nation. This is the burden of Browne's "Treatise on reformation without tarrying for any." He vehemently attacks the ministers who will not use the spiritual authority they possess, as preachers and pastors, to instruct and guide, in separated assemblies, those who are ready for instruction and guidance. Again and again this argument occurs—in waiting for the magistrate to command and compel Reformation you are unfaithful: you are imposing your own duty upon him. Either the magistrate is a Christian, in which case within the church he must obey the voice of Christ, of which the preacher is the interpreter; or he is not a Christian, in which case it is a shame to the church and the preacher to wait upon him. In a passage of great boldness he applies this argument to the Queen herself. "They say, behold we have a Christian prince and a mother in Israel; but can they be Christians when they make them to refuse, or withstand the government of Christ in his church, or will not be subject unto it? If they, therefore, refuse or withstand, how should they be tarried for? If they be with them, there is no tarrying; and if they be against them, they are no Christians, and therefore also there can be no tarrying. For the worthier may not tarry for the unworthy, but rather forsake them, as it is written (Acts ii.), 'Save yourselves from this fro-

ward generation.'” This is the sort of reference to the Queen which afterward figured in the examinations of the Separatists when being tried for sedition ; but manifestly it is not the Queen who is being attacked, but the preachers who are waiting for her authority. In another passage he advances from the same argument to a statement of the true nature of authority in religion. “Every preacher must run to the Queen and to the council forsooth, as though they were of their charge, and the magistrates must plant and reform all churches at once. If they be of their flocks, why should they tarry for them ? unless they will have the sheep to force the shepherd unto his duty. Indeed, the magistrate may force him, but it is his shame to tarry till he be forced. Be ashamed, therefore, ye foolish shepherds, and lay not a burden on the magistrates, as though they should do that in building the Lord’s kingdom which the apostles and prophets could not do. They could not force religion, as ye would have the magistrates to do, and it was forbidden to the apostles to preach to the unworthy, or to force a planting or government of the church. The Lord’s kingdom is not by force, neither by an army or strength, as be the kingdoms of this world.” In another passage he denounces the desire of the clergy to use the civil authority for spiritual ends, their transference of discipline from the membership of the particular church to the magistrates. “There is no end of their pride and cruelty, which ascend up and sit in the magistrate’s chair and smite the people with a continual plague, and such of them as have not yet gotten the room do cry for Discipline, Discipline, that is, for a civil forcing to imprison the people, or otherwise by violence to handle and beat them, if they will not obey them. But the Lord shall bring them down to the dust, and to the pit, as abominable carcasses which would be above the clouds, yea, which dare presume into the throne of Christ Jesus, and usurp that authority and calling in his church, which is opposed and contrary to his kingdom and government. This

shall appear afterward ; in the meantime let them know that the Lord's people is of the willing sort. They shall come unto Zion and inquire the way to Jerusalem, not by force nor compulsion, but with their faces thitherward ; yea, as the he goats shall they be before the flock, for the haste they have unto Zion, and they themselves shall call for the covenant, saying, Come and let us cleave fast unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall never be forgotten. For it is the conscience and not the power of man that will drive us to seek the Lord's kingdom."

Other aspects of the Separatist testimony will come before us in the following chapters ; the object of this chapter has been to point out that Separatism was a natural and necessary outgrowth of the English Reformation. The difference between the Separatists and the Catholics—Roman or Anglican—was theological and fundamental. The difference between the Separatists and the Puritans was political, one of method. The Puritans were for a national Reformation in order to the salvation of individuals ; the Separatists sought the individuals and believed that only through their fidelity and spiritual growth could the nation be reformed. In their endeavour they re-discovered and formulated the simple apostolic conception of the Church ; from which, since the second century after Christ, Christendom had been departing farther and farther. Our recognition of the nobleness of the two Puritan ideas—the solidarity of the nation and the sanctity of ordination—should not blind us to the superior elevation and courage of the Separatists' faith. They may not have been practised statesmen, but they understood the nature and function of spiritual power. And the true political wisdom proved to be with them. The Reformation movement would have been effectually suppressed if the Puritan dream of a national church had been realised. Every religious revival since the close of the sixteenth century has ultimately tended to an enlarged freedom of action, and an

increased sense of responsibility, in the particular congregation. The principle is now almost universally recognised that, for the national well-being as well as for religious prosperity, there must be self-regulating Christian communities, interpreting for themselves the will of God, existing within the state but not using the civil power.





CHAPTER II.

EARLY SEPARATIST CHURCHES.

THE previous chapter has been concerned with the literature of Separatism ; the object of this chapter is to trace the actual development of Separatist communities in London, and to give, from contemporary documents, some descriptions of the life they lived. The literary history of Congregationalism may be said to begin, in 1582, with Browne's pamphlet ; but there were churches in existence before the Congregational church doctrine was formulated. In a dialogue, printed in 1611, between "Desiderius and Miles Micklebound," we read, "Were there none that did write for this cause before Browne?" "Yes, verily," is the answer, "the Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists have, in their authentic writings, laid down the ground thereof, and upon that ground is all their building reared up and surely settled. Moreover, many of the martyrs, both former and later, have maintained it, as is to be seen in Acts and Monuments of the Church. Also, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, there was a separated Church, whereof Mr. Fitz was Pastor, that professed and practised that cause before Mr. Browne wrote for it." Henry Ainsworth also, a learned divine, called by Bishop Hall the Rabbi

of the Separatists, speaks of "that separated Church, whereof Mr. Fitz was pastor, in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign." And John Robinson refers to the same church, when speaking of Boulton who was an elder of it. Even this church had its forerunner, in a secret community, during the reign of Mary, under Bonner's persecution.¹

Mr. Hanbury has compiled the following story from Foxe ; and there were other such churches in the East and South of England. "We learn from Fox, that 'upon New Year's day, anno 1555-6, at night following, certain men and women of the city, to the number of thirty, and a minister with them, named Master Rose, were taken as they were in a house in Bow Church-yard, at the communion ; and, the same night, they were all committed to prison. And on the Thursday following, being the third day of January, Mr. Rose was brought before the Bishop of Winchester, being Lord Chancellor ; and from thence, the same day, he was committed to the Tower.' And, in another place, that Mr. John Rough, having left Scotland, his native country, in search of the Gospel, arrived November 10th, 1557, in London. 'Where, hearing of the secret society and holy congregation of God's children there assembled, he joined himself unto them ; afterward, being elected their minister and preacher. . . . The twelfth day of December, he, with Cuthbert Sympson and others, through the crafty and traitorous suggestion of a false, hypocritical, and dissembling brother called Roger Serjeant, a tailor, were apprehended by the Vice Chamberlain of the Queen's household, at the Saracen's Head, in Islington, where the congregation had then proposed to assemble themselves to their godly and accustomable exercises of prayer and hearing the Word of

¹ "Mr. Henry Barrowe's Platform." Sheet I, 8. See also Waddington. "Congregational Martyrs." P. 15. "Works of Robinson, the Pilgrim Father." Ashton. (Lond. 1851). Vol. ii. p. 57. "Congregationalism : Old and New," by John Brown, D.D. "Early Independents." Tract No. vi.

God : which pretence, for the safeguard of all the rest, they yet at their examinations covered and excused by hearing of a play that was appointed to be at that place.' He was burned, December 22nd, as was 'the deacon of that said godly company and congregation,' Cuthbert Sympson also, March 28th following, after having been cruelly racked. It seems that this was a congregation of 'Gospellers,' who approved of King Edward's Service-book, and had adopted it. The 'play,' being on a Sunday, might have been one of those Popish devices called 'holy mysteries.' For 'the acting of plays, in churches, seems to have been frequent in this and other nations, during the times of popery ; as appears from the decretal epistle against them. At the Reformation, and for some time after, those plays and interludes were very common ; and, being representations of the corruptions of the monks and the popish clergy, were very acceptable to the people.' " 1

The relation of the Separatist churches to the earlier and casual associations of Protestants through the Reformation struggle is illustrated by this narrative. When Wyclif's "poor priests" went about the country preaching, they gathered assemblies who continued more or less attached to Reformation doctrines, and were prepared to undergo hardships in coming together for further instruction and for mutual conference. The preamble of a law, passed in the second year of Henry IV., sets out "that some had a new faith about the sacraments of the church, and the authority of the same ; and did preach without authority, gathered conventicles, taught schools, wrote books against the catholic faith, with many other heinous aggravations." 2 Archbishop Warham, in 1511, compelled six men and four women, most of them being of Tenterden, to abjure certain errors, and to

1 Hanbury's "Historical Memorials relating to Independents." Vol. i. pp. 15, 16.

2 Burnet's "History of the Reformation" (1841). Vol. i. p. 20.

swear "that they should discover all whom they knew to hold these errors, or who were suspected of them, or that did keep any private conventicles, or were fautors, or comforters of them that published such doctrines."¹ The persecution of the Lollards thinned their numbers, but increased the intensity of conviction of those who remained faithful, and gave them a new sense of Christian fellowship. The reforming impulse in the early part of Henry VIII.'s reign was marked by this tendency; an interesting instance is found in the story of Dalaber, an Oxford Reformer. In 1525, an association of "Christian brothers," consisting mostly of poor men, tradesmen and artisans, with a very few of the clergy, was formed in London, "carefully organised, provided with moderate funds, which were regularly audited," for the distribution of Bibles and tracts and the spread of Reformation doctrines through the country. There was a branch of this society in Cardinal College (now Christchurch), Oxford, "for the secret reading and discussion of the Epistles," under John Clark, one of a little group of Cambridge Reformers whom Wolsey, knowing them to be men of unusual promise, had brought from Cambridge. Clark, aware of the dangers impending over this association, sought to dissuade fresh members from joining it. "I fell down on my knees at his feet," says one of them, Anthony Dalaber, "and with tears and sighs besought him that for the tender mercy of God he should not refuse me, saying that I trusted verily that he who had begun this on me would not forsake me, but would give me grace to continue therein to the end. When he heard me say so he came to me, took me in his arms, and kissed me, saying, 'The Lord God Almighty grant you so to do, and from henceforth ever take me for your father, and I will take you for my son in Christ.'" The danger feared by Clark soon enveloped them. Thomas Garret, a fellow of Magdalen, and a leading member of the London society, who had come to

¹ Burnet's "History of the Reformation" (1841). Vol. i. p. 21.

Oxford, with New Testaments and books of Protestant divinity, was informed against, and the proctors were after him. He was seen to enter Dalaber's rooms, and left in disguise. "When he was gone down the stairs from my chamber," Dalaber says, "I straightways did shut my chamber door, and went into my study ; and taking the New Testament in my hands, kneeled down on my knees, and with many a deep sigh and salt tear, I did, with much deliberation, read over the tenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, praying that God would endue his tender and lately-born little flock in Oxford with heavenly grace by his Holy Spirit ; that quietly to their own salvation, with all godly patience, they might bear Christ's heavy cross, which I now saw was presently to be laid on their young and weak backs, unable to bear so huge a burden without the great help of His Holy Spirit."¹

These "conventicles," casually gathered and soon dispersed, many of them to meet no more, and this "Association of Christian brethren," were not, indeed, churches ; but they must have had much to do with the development of that sense of what Christian fellowship really is which afterward took form in the Separatist communities. Within our own times we have seen something like this under easier circumstances. The societies, itinerant preachings, the Oxford gatherings of the Methodists have grown into churches, having a consistent church doctrine and a formulated polity.

The London community, under Mr. Rose and Mr. Rough, may fairly be called a church, and it was approaching very nearly to the Congregational type. It was an habitual assembly of men and women, intimately acquainted with one another, exercising confidence in each other's religious character and purpose ; it met for prayer and the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments ; it had a minister and a deacon. It differed from the Separatist communities afterward formed in

¹ Froude. Vol. ii. pp. 26-53. Green. Vol. ii. p. 129.

this—its separatism was an accident, and not of the essence of its constitution. It assembled for Protestant worship, in the only way possible to it ; when Protestantism was re-established the reason for its separate existence seemed gone. Light is thrown on this point by a paragraph from John Robinson. Certain ministers had controverted his position that the separation of the godly from the ungodly is necessary to the preservation of the gospel in its purity ; and they cited the existence of these secret assemblies in Mary's time as illustrating their contention. Robinson answers thus—"That which they add, of sundry secret congregations in Queen Mary's days in many parts of the land, is but a boast ; there were very few of them in any. But, where they say, that these did upon Queen Elizabeth's entrance openly profess the gospel, it is untrue ; there was not one congregation separated in Queen Mary's days, that so remained in Queen Elizabeth's. The congregations were dissolved, and the persons in them bestowed themselves in their several parishes, where their livings and estates lay. The circumcised were mingled with the uncircumcised, whence came that monstrous confusion, against which we witness. And show me one of your ministers continuing his charge in Queen Elizabeth's days, over the flock to which he ministered in Queen Mary's days, the persecuted gospel. It is certain the congregations, whether many or few, were all dispersed, and that the members of them joined themselves to the profane apostate Papists, where their outward occasions lay. As then an handful, or bundle of corn, shuffled into a field of weeds, though in itself it retain the same nature, yet cannot make the field a corn-field : so neither could this small handful of separated people in Queen Mary's days sanctify the whole field of idolatrous, and profane multitude in the land, by their seating themselves among them." ¹ The characteristic difference between Separatist and Puritan appears here. The congregations

¹ Robinson. Vol. ii. pp. 489, 490.

of Mary's time were "secret" rather than "separate" assemblies. The use of King Edward's service-book indicates that they were still impressed with the idea of the Protestant National Church. With the accession of Elizabeth they believed that the national reformation was to proceed, and they disbanded, to lose themselves in the parishes.

Some quotations from Bishop Hooper and Archdeacon Philpot, martyrs in Mary's reign, will help us to see more vividly the relation of these secret assemblies to the Separatist movement; both wherein they fall short of the Congregational idea and how they prepared the way for its assertion. Hooper, in "a letter sent to the Christian congregation, wherein he proveth that true faith cannot be kept secret in the heart without confession thereof openly to the world when occasion serveth," urgently demands separation from the Romish worship. He affirms that bodily presence at the mass is worship of the mass, and proceeds—"It is not enough for a Christian man to say, I know the mass is naught; but to obey civil laws and orders I will do outwardly as other men do, yet in my heart abhor it, and never think it to be good. Doubtless these two minds, the spirit to think well and the body to do evil, in this respect be both naught, and God will spue the whole man out of his mouth, as he did the minister of the congregation of Laodicea."¹ Writing from the Fleet prison to "certain godly persons, professors and lovers of the truth, instructing them how they should behave themselves at the beginning of the change of religion," he recommends separate gatherings. "There is no better way to be used in this troublesome time for your consolation than many times to have assemblies together of such men and women as be of your religion in Christ, and there to talk and renew among yourselves the truth of your religion; to see what ye be by the word of God, and to remember what ye

¹ "Hooper's Later Writings." (Parker Society). P. 574. Coverdale is responsible for using the term "Christian Congregation" in the title.

were before ye came to the knowledge thereof, to weigh and confer the dreams and false lies of the preachers that now preach with the word of God that retaineth all truth : and by such talk and familiar resorting together, ye shall the better find out all their lies that now go about to deceive you, and also both know and love the truth that God hath opened to us. It is much requisite that the members of Christ comfort one another, make prayers together, confer one with another ; so shall ye be the stronger, and God's Spirit shall not be absent from you, but in the midst of you, to teach you, to comfort you, to make you wise in all godly things, patient in adversity, and strong in persecution. Ye see how the congregation of the wicked, by helping one another, make their wicked religion and themselves strong against God's truth and his people. If ye may, have some learned man, that can out of the Scriptures speak unto you of faith and true honouring of God ; also that can shew you the descent of Christ's church from the beginning of it until this day, that ye may perceive by the life of your forefathers these two things : the one, that Christ's word, which said that all his must suffer persecution and trouble in this world, be true ; the other, that none of all his, before our time, escaped trouble : then shall ye perceive that it is but a folly for one that professeth Christ truly to look for the love of the world. . . . And pray to God when ye come together that he will use and order you and your doings to these three ends, which ye must take heed of : the first, that ye glorify God ; the next, that ye edify the church and congregation ; the third, that ye profit your own souls." ¹ Philpot goes further. Writing from the King's Bench Prison, "to the Christian congregation,² exhorting them to refrain themselves from the idolatrous service of the papists, and to serve God with a pure and undefiled conscience after his word," he says—

¹ "Hooper's Later Writings." (Parker Society). Pp. 589, 590.

² Coverdale.

"Wheresoever we perceive any people to worship God truly after his word, there we may be certain the church of Christ to be, unto the which we ought to associate ourselves, and to desire, with the prophet David, to praise God in the midst of this church. But, if we behold, through the iniquity of time, congregations to be made with counterfeit religion, otherwise than the word of God doth teach, we ought then, if we be required to be companions thereof, to say again with David, 'I have hated the synagogue of the malignant, and will not sit with the wicked.' In the Apocalypse, the church of Ephesus is highly commended, because she tried such as said they were apostles and were not in deed, and therefore would not abide the company of them. . . . Some fondly think that the presence of the body¹ is not material, so that the heart do not consent to their wicked doings. But such persons little consider what St. Paul writeth to the Corinthians, commanding them to glorify God as well in body as in soul. Moreover, we can do no greater injury to the true church of Christ than to seem to have forsaken her, or disallow her by cleaving to her adversary. . . . In the 18th of the Apocalypse, God biddeth us plainly to depart from this Babylonical synagogue, and not to be partakers of her trespass. St. Paul to the Thessalonians commandeth us, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to 'withdraw ourselves from every brother that walketh inordinately, and not according to the institution which he hath received of him.' . . . Another sort of persons do make a cloke for the rain under the pretence of obedience to the magistrates, whom we ought to obey, although they be wicked. But such must learn of Christ to give to Cæsar that is Cæsar's, and to God that is due to God."² Philpot also insists, in this matter of public worship, on the duty of shewing a true belief by true works, and of forsaking the world in order to associate with the true church.

¹ That is, at church. Cartwright afterward used this argument.

² "Writings of Archdeacon Philpot." (Parker Society). Pp. 220-23.

Dr. Dexter, quoting part of the second passage from Hooper here cited, says rightly—"But Hooper was no Separatist, and no adviser of Separatism."¹ Nor was Philpot. The true church which he has in his mind is the Church of England as it was in Edward's time. "Our God," he says, "is a jealous God, and cannot be content that we should be of any other body than of that unspotted church whereof he is the head only, and wherein he hath planted us by baptism." And again, "After that we have built ourselves into the true church of God, it hath pleased him by giving us over into the hands of the wicked synagogues to prove our building." But there are ideas here—that separation may become the highest duty, that the church is to try the preacher, that the duty of mutual conference among Christians is prior to that of hearing a preacher—which are of "liberal application"; they were sure to be taken up by perplexed Protestants when the Reforming work was again stayed under Elizabeth. The perception that the local or particular church was the Church of Apostolic times alone was needed that these impulses after purity of fellowship might crystallise into consistent doctrines. The earliest Separatists looked wistfully back on the secret assemblies of Mary's time. "It is well known," said Penry, in a petition addressed to Elizabeth, although never presented, "that there was then in London under the burden, and elsewhere in exile, more flourishing churches than any now tolerated by your authority." And Browne has a striking passage, in which he shews himself at once sympathetic and critical in his estimate of the Reformers who preceded him. "They profess"—that is, the tarrying preachers—"in their hearts to help Christ's little flock. But do they pay their vows in their palaces and parishes, as Philpot did his vows in Smithfield? . . . The Pope's old house was destroyed in England, and they are called to build him a new. In the time of King Edward the Sixth they began such a building. They

¹ Dexter. "Congregationalism as seen in its Literature." P. 632.



BRIDEWELL (*Fitz's Prison*).

had got the popish tools, but they could not use them. God was merciful by the rod of Queen Mary, and did beat such evil weapons out of their hands."

Henry Jacob, who belonged to the second generation of Separatists, has exactly marked out the difference between these secret assemblies of Mary's time and the Separatist churches of Elizabeth's. "The meetings of Christians in small numbers, as in times of persecution," says he, "were not so many churches properly, because they were uncertain and occasional. A true and proper church being necessarily an ordinary set company and a constant society."¹ Such a company was Fitz's church; "an ordinary set company and a constant society," having its minister, and elders, and deacons, its stated times of meeting, its idea of what a church of Christ should be. It had no settled place of assembly; to avoid its watchful enemies it came together in private houses. About a hundred of its adherents met on the 19th of June, 1567, to celebrate a wedding, and hold a religious meeting, in Plumbers' Hall. The sheriffs broke in upon them, and fourteen or fifteen of them were sent to the Compter. From their examination on the next day, before Grindal, Bishop of London, we learn exactly how they came to constitute themselves into a church.

One Smith, who seemed to Grindal to be "the ancientest of them," replied thus to a question put to him by the bishop. "So long as we might have the word freely preached, and the sacraments administered without the preferring of idolatrous gear about it, we never assembled together in houses. But when it came to this point, that all our preachers were displaced by your law, that would not subscribe to your apparel and your law, so that we could not hear none of them in any church by the space of seven or eight weeks, except Father Coverdale, of whom we have a good

¹ Waddington. "Surrey Congregational History." Pp. 12, 13.

opinion, and yet (God knoweth) the man was so fearful, that he durst not be known unto us where he preached, though we sought it at his house ;—and then were we troubled and commanded to your courts from day to day for not coming to our parish churches :—then we bethought us what were best to do ; and we remembered that there was a congregation of us in this city in Queen Mary's days ; and a congregation at Geneva, which used a book and order of preaching, ministering of the sacraments and discipline, most agreeable to the word of God ; which book is allowed by that godly and well learned man, Master Calvin, and the preachers there, which book and order we now hold.”¹

Dr. Waddington discovered, in the State Paper Office, three singularly interesting documents which give us a vivid picture of the character and the sufferings of this church, as well as complete its identification with Fitz's society, through the occurrence of some names which are the same in both companies. The first is a small black letter sheet which runs thus :—

“The Trewe Markes of Christe's church, &c.

“The order of the Privye church in London, whiche by the malice of Satan is falselie slandered and evell spoken of.

“The mindes of them, that by the strengthe and workinge of the Almighty, our Lord Jesus Christe, haue set their hands and hartes, to the pure unmingled and sincere worshippinge of God, accordinge to his blessed and glorious worde in al things, onely abolishinge and abhorringe all tradicions and inuentions of man, what soeuer in the same Religion and Seruice of our Lorde God, knowinge this alwayes, that the trewe and afflicted church of our Lorde and Sauyoure Jesus Christe, eyther hathe or else ever more continually under the crosse stryue for to haue. Fyrste and formoste, the Glorious worde and Euangell preached, not in bondage and subiection, but freely and purelye. Secondly to haue the Sacraments mynistered purely, onely, and all together

¹ “Archbishop Grindal's Remains.” (Parker Society). P. 203.

accordinge to the institution and good worde of the Lorde Jesus, without any tradicion or inuention of man. And laste of all to haue not the fylthye Cannon lawe, but dissipyne onely, and all together agreeable to the same heauenlye and allmighty worde of our good Lorde, Jesus Chryste. RICHARDE FYTZ, *Minister*."

A written paper which, beginning as a petition to the Queen, ends with direct prayer to God, is signed by twenty-seven persons—sixteen women and eleven men. After affirming their belief that "the Almighty our God will not always suffer such dishonour to His blessed evangel, which for the sins and trials of His people, He suffereth the Papists and neuters, false brethren and domestic enemies to suppress, to wrest and abuse, to serve their purposes, as they persuade themselves ;" they proceed—

"Therefore, according to the saying of the Almighty our God (Matt. xviii. 20), 'wherever two or three are gathered together in my name there am I,' so we a poor congregation whom God hath separated from the Churches of England, and from the mingled and false worshipping therein used, out of the which assemblies the Lord our only Saviour hath called us, and still calleth, saying, come out from among them, and separate yourselves from them, and touch no unclean thing, then will I receive you, and I will be your God, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord. Cor. vi. 17, 18. So as God giveth strength at this day, we do serve the Lord every Sabbath day in houses, and on the fourth day in the week we meet or come together weekly to use prayer and exercise discipline on them which do deserve it, by the strength and sure warrant of the Lord's good word, as in Matt. xviii. 15-18 (1 Cor. v.).

"But wo be to this wicked Canon Law, the gain whereof hath caused the bishops and clergy of England to forsake the right way, and hath gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor,¹ which have, through their pomp and covetousness, brought the gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ into such

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 15.

slander and contempt, that men do think, for the most part, that the Papists do use and hold a better religion than those which call themselves Christians and are not, but do lie. Rev. 3, verse 9. The Holy Ghost saith, 'I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, which had two horns like the lamb.' So this secret and disguised Antichrist, to wit, this Canon Law, with the branches and their maintainers, though not so openly, have, by long imprisonment, pined and killed the Lord's servants¹ (as our minister, Richard Fitz, Thomas Bowland, deacon, one Partryche, and Gyles Foulter, and besides them a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and people and tongues, Rev. vii. 9), whose good cause and faithful testimony, though we should cease to groan and cry unto our God to redress such wrongs and cruel handling of His poor members, the very walls of the prisons about this city—as the Gatehouse, Bridewell, the Counters, the King's Bench, the Marshalsea, and the White Lion—would testify God's anger kindled against this land for such injustice and subtle persecution."

The document goes on to pray—"Lord, we most humbly beseech Thee to strengthen the Queen's highness with His Holy Spirit, that in the thirteenth year of her reign, she may cast down all hye places of Idolatry within her land, with the popish canon law, and all the superstition and commandments of men, and pluck up by the root all filthy ceremonies pertaining to the same, and that her highness may send forth princes and ministers, and give them the Book of the Lord, that they may bring home the people of God to the purity and truth of the Apostolic Church."² It ends with a prayer for the Queen.

The third document is a black letter sheet, purporting to be the declaration, by an individual, of his reasons for separation, and

¹ Matt. xxiii. 34, 35.

² Waddington. "Congregational History, 1200-1567." Pp. 742-4. "Congregational Martyrs." Pp. 11-14. Corrected from the original document. S. P. Dom. Elizabeth. Addenda. Vol. xx.

his renunciation of the "relique of Antichrist." It ends with a prayer ; " God give us strength still to strive in suffering under the cross, that the blessed word of our God may only rule, and have the highest place."

There are certain points in which this London community had not attained to the complete Congregational system afterward elaborated by Browne and Barrowe ; but there is considerable advance beyond the position of the secret assemblies in Mary's time. The church is in protest against the incomplete Reformation in a professedly Protestant nation ; the " good word of the Lord Jesus, without any tradition or invention of man," alone is recognised as the authority for ministration of the sacraments ; but most important of all is what is said about discipline. This is regarded as the charge of the whole church ; any church where this is so is entitled to be called Congregational.

For several years we find this persecuted flock in hiding, often dispersed but never broken up, meeting during the summer in woods and gravel-pits, during the winter in private houses, never without men who dared to act as pastors, elders, and deacons. They met in different parts of London, in St. Nicholas Lane, in Smithfield, Aldgate, Stepney, Ratcliffe, and in Islington, the house where the Protestant congregation of Mary's time assembled being particularly mentioned, and south of the Thames in Southwark, in Deptford, and near Bedlam. From depositions before the justices, of the prisoners and of informers, we get pictures of their habit of worship. Daniel Buck, scrivener, of the Borough of Southwark, being interrogated, refused to swear upon a book, or to take any other oath than to protest before God that all his sayings were true.¹ He " saith that he was upon Sunday last, in the afternoon, in the constable's house

¹ The liberty granted to the Friends, under the Toleration Act, to affirm instead of taking oaths in courts was extended to Separatists.

at Islington ; where he did see, among others of his fraternity, Penryn (*sic*) ; and that George Johnson was reader there in the constable's house, as aforesaid ; and that there were above forty of them together, and divers others that were not of their society." Being asked what vow or promise he had made when he came first into their society ; he answered, he made this protestation, that he would walk with the rest of the congregation as long as they did walk in the way of the Lord, and as far as they might be warranted by the word of God.

"And being further demanded, who was their pastor ; and by whom he was created ? Saith, that Mr. Francis Johnson was chosen pastor ; and Mr. Greenwood doctor (teacher) ; and Bowman and Lee deacons ; and Studley and George Kniston, apothecary, were chosen elders, in the house of one Fox, in St. Nicholas Lane, London, about half a year sithence, all in one day, by their congregation ; or at Mr. Bilson's house in Cree Church ; he remembereth not whether. And, That the sacrament of baptism was, as he called it, delivered there to the number of seven persons by Johnson. But they had neither godfathers nor godmothers. And he took water, and washed the faces of them that were baptized. The children that were there baptized were the children of Mr. Studley, Mr. Lee, with others, being of several years of age ; saying only in the administration of this sacrament, ' I do baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ' ; without using any other ceremony therein, as is now usually observed according to the Book of Common Prayer : being then present, the said Dan. Studley, Will. Shepherd, Will. Marshall, Joh. Becke, with the names of a great many more, with some women.

"Being further demanded, The manner of the Lord's Supper administered among them ? He saith, That five white loaves or more were set upon the table. That the pastor did break the bread, and then delivered it to some of them, and the deacons delivered



INTERRUPTED AT THE COMMUNION.

to the rest ; some of the congregation sitting, and some standing about the table. And, That the pastor delivered the cup unto one, and he to another, till they had all drunken : using the words at the delivery thereof, according as it is set down in the eleventh of Corinthians, the 24th verse. Being demanded, Whether they used to make a collection or gathering among them ? said, That there is a gathering of money among them. The which money is delivered to the deacons, to be distributed according to their directions, to the use of the poor. And he heard say, That they did use to marry in their congregation. And further, refuseth to come to the church, and obey the Form of Service, which is used in the Book of Common Prayer ; because there is not a Reformation according to the Word of God."¹

Another deposition says, "They acknowledged that they had met in the fields in the summer season, by five o'clock on a Lord's day morning, and in winter in private houses. They continued all the day in prayer and expounding the Scriptures ; dined together, and afterwards made collection for their food ; and sent the remainder of their money to their brethren in prison."² From a hostile tract, entitled, "The Brownists' Synagogue," we have a few more details. "In that house where they intend to meet, there is one appointed to keep the door, for the intent, to give notice if there should be any insurrection, warning may be given them. They do not flock together, but come two or three in a company ; any man may be admitted thither ; and all being gathered together, the man appointed to teach stands in the midst of the room, and his audience gather about him. He prayeth about the space of half an hour ; and part of his prayer is, that those which came thither to scoff and laugh, God would be pleased to turn their hearts ; by which means they think to escape undiscovered. His sermon is about the space of an hour, and

¹ Quoted from Strype's Annals. Hanbury, vol. i. pp. 85, 86.

² Waddington. "Congregational History, 1567-1700." P. 81.

then doth another stand up to make the text more plain ; and at the latter end, he entreats all to go home severally, lest, the next meeting, they should be interrupted by those which are of the opinion of the wicked. They seem very stedfast in their opinions, and say, 'rather than they will turn, they will burn.'"¹

A church is still in existence whose connection with this persecuted company can be traced : the church of the Pilgrim Fathers, in Southwark. But it is impossible to read such books as, for instance, Wilson's "Dissenting Churches in London," without suspecting that other existing congregations originated in this movement. About the same time Browne and Harrison were gathering a company in Norwich, which, after migrating to Middleburgh, fell into "lamentable breach and division." In discussing a Bill before Parliament the very year when the depositions just quoted were taken, Sir Walter Raleigh regretfully declared his fear that there were near twenty thousand Brownists in England ; and although the number may be exaggerated, it is evident that their doctrines were spreading. Despair of Reformation from the Queen and Parliament was converting many Puritans ; and the Separatists' custom of "admitting any man" to their assemblies was as wise as it was courageous, seeing that their object was to win their fellow-citizens to the truth.

It is impossible even to conjecture how many of these churches there were outside London. We read of their existence at Norwich and Chatham, in the West of England, and "sparsed into several parts of the realm." The constitution of some of them must have been very incomplete ; but the polity they "ever tended to have" is clear. Its groundwork was purity of church membership, that no open or grievous sin was to pass unrebuked ; that persistence in sin must be met with the severance of the unrepentant person from the fellowship ; and that discipline, that is, not simply the punishment of offenders, but a tender and

¹ Hanbury. Vol. i. p. 86.

watchful care of each other, was the obligation of all the members.

Next to the church they thought of the ministry. "The ministry appointed unto the government and service of the church of Christ," writes Barrowe, "we find to be of two sorts: elders and deacons. The elders, some of them to give attendance unto the public ministry of the word and sacraments, as the pastor and teacher. The other elders, together with them, to give attendance to the public order and government of the church. The deacon to attend the gathering and distributing the goods of the church." In another writing, five sorts of ministers are specified: the pastor, the doctor or teacher, the elder or governor or ancient, who "must be ready assistants to the pastor and teachers; helping to bear their burden, but not intruding into their office"; the deacon, and the reliever or widow. In the precision and fulness with which they have treated this question of the ministry two things are very apparent. The first is—their constructive purpose; they are no longer secret assemblies, separated for a time, but looking to return to the National church; they are elaborately a system of church order which shall endure. The next is—the source of their inspiration; they are keeping closely to the New Testament. When they treat of other matters, such as the relation of the Church to the State, they shew themselves acquainted with other habits of thought—the principles of jurisprudence, the common law of England, the reasonings of Holland—but within the church they are severe copyists of the Apostolic modes.

The method of calling and ordaining ministers is thus laid down by Barrowe—"Every particular congregation, being a faithful flock, destitute of some minister—for example, of a pastor—ought to make choice of some one faithful christian, of whose virtues, knowledge, judgment, fitness, and conversation, according to the rules in that behalf prescribed (1 Tim. iii., Tit. i., Acts xiv.),

they have assured proof and experience, in some christian congregation or other where he hath lived. Such a one, the whole congregation being gathered together in the name of God, with fasting, and prayer for the especial assistance of his Holy Spirit, to be directed to that person whom the Lord hath made meet, and appointed unto them for that high character and ministry. In which election every particular member of the said congregation hath his peculiar interest of assent or dissent ; shewing his reasons of dissent in reverent manner, not disturbing the holy and peaceable order of the church. . . .”

“ This choice, thus made, accepted, and determined, the elect is to be publicly ordained, and received in and of the same congregation whereof and whereunto he is chosen ; if there be an eldership in that congregation, by them, as the most meet instruments ; with fasting, prayer, exhortation, &c. : if not, then by the help of the elders of some other faithful congregation ; one church being to help and assist another in these offices. But, if the defection and apostasy be so general as there be not, anywhere, any true elders to be found, or conveniently to be had, yet then hath the church that hath power and commandment to choose and use ministers—yea, that only hath that most high and great spiritual power of our Lord Jesus Christ, upon earth, committed unto their hands—power also to ordain their ministers by the most fit members and means they have. For, the eldership doth not add more power, but more help and service to the church in this action. Neither doth this action—which is but a publishing of that formal contract and agreement between the whole church and these elect ; the church giving, and the elect receiving those offices, as by the commandment of God, with mutual covenant and vow, each to other, in all duties—belong to the elders only, as separate from the church, to do it for and in the church ; but to the elders, as the most fit members and instruments of the church.”¹

¹ Hanbury. Vol. i. pp. 57-8.

The assertion of this last paragraph—that it is the church, constituted on the basis of Christian character and maintained in its purity by discipline, which gives authority to the ministry, and not the ministry which confers grace on the church—is one which the Separatists lost no opportunity of making. If it were otherwise, says Barrowe, “When the true ministry ceased, as in the general apostasy, they could never again be recovered in the church.” He treats the papal notion of “a personal succession of ministers in some place, ever since the apostles’ time,” as a *primâ facie* absurdity. Even more absurd, he says, is the assertion made by the Prelatists and the Puritans that a true public ministry, sacraments, &c., could be preserved in an apostate church. Robert Browne deals with the same question. He says scornfully, “They have the word and the sacraments, and as for the government or discipline, it is but an accessory and hang bye, needful indeed, but yet they may be without it, and be the church of God notwithstanding.” Speaking of the preaching of the word by those who do not obey it, he says, “They are ready for the gospel as the ivy bush¹ is ready to draw you the wine.” Speaking of the sacraments, he says—“Let them answer, whether are the baptized presented to the minister, or to God and the church? or whether doth the minister receive any to fellowship, or rather the church? For though the minister be guide in receiving them, yet it is the church which doth partake unto them that fellowship.” The responsibility of the whole membership in doctrine and discipline was constantly kept before them. While those who had “a special charge” took the lead in prayer, thanksgiving, exhortation and edifying, all men which had the gift took part in these exercises. There was a weekly meeting of the church for conference and discipline.

The intense dislike these men had to the Canon Law comes

¹ The vintners’ sign.

out, again and again, in their controversial writings ; instances of it have been quoted in this chapter. The reason is not far to seek. The Canon Law is the perpetuation of the Romish discipline in the church ; the orders of the clergy and their usurpation of the authority of the people were what they were, not by the laws of England but by Canon law. The degradation of the public conscience in the matter of Henry's divorce was of the same origin ; the case was argued by the Canonists, and Canonists might be bought. But the revolt of the Separatists went deeper than these accidents ; it was a great demand for ethical simplicity. The Canons of the church, originally a collection of rules for the clergy, and practical directions to the faithful how to order their conduct in some few particulars, had gradually become a complicated mass of precepts which it needed an expert to understand, and which interfered with life at every turn. They stood between the christian man and a simple obedience of Christ. They were like the Rabbinical traditions which obscured and sometimes annulled the law which they professed to apply. They were like the observance of days and years among the Galatians, which made Paul fear that his work among them had been in vain. Conscience lost itself in casuistry ; in the multitude of details the pious heart had ceased to be a guide. The rapid progress of Separatism—for rapid it was from so small a beginning—and its enduring hold on English history are due to the absoluteness with which it broke way from the ecclesiastical tradition. The Separatists were not theologically more orthodox than the Puritans ; but ethically they were simpler, more courageous men. The law of Christ, they affirmed, was simple, easy to be understood, possible to be obeyed ; therefore within the church there must be no other law, not canon law nor common law nor civil law, but only the New Testament. What christian men need for their progress is instruction and mutual help ; and this each "company and fellowship of faithful and holy people" can furnish in its ministry and members.

We have seen Whitgift's description of the church in the apostles' time,¹ that its members were few and met often, so that they were well known to each other; that all or most of its members were virtuous and godly, and such as did sincerely profess the word; that they had knowledge, and were able to judge who were meet to be their pastor; that there was in the church no idolaters, no superstitious persons, no Papists; and that there was no church established, that is, the church, in the absence of Christian magistrates, was popularly governed. In all these respects, it was the object of the Separatists, their only object, to return to the apostolic model. Whitgift was even now, as our next chapter will narrate, imposing on them another apostolic badge—"The church was under the cross."

¹ *Antea.* P. 18.





CHAPTER III.

THE CONGREGATIONAL MARTYRS.

THERE were, as we have seen, two impulses manifest in the Separatist movement of the sixteenth century, from which has developed the Congregationalism of England, America and the British Colonies. The one was doctrinal and constructive : earnest men, bent on religious reformation, seeing how further advance was effectually checked by Elizabeth and the worldly prelates—mere courtiers—with whom she took counsel, gave themselves to the study of the New Testament, that they might discover the idea of the church which was in the mind of Christ and his apostles. The other was practical and historic : the small secret societies of persons who separated themselves from the unreformed worship of the parish assemblies, and from the indifference and immorality which characterised so large a portion of their fellow-countrymen, grew into churches as naturally as did the primitive communities who separated themselves from the formalism of the synagogue and surrounding heathendom. Each of these impulses had its representative in the two first of the martyrs of 1593. Barrowe was a man of ideas ; the genius of the jurispudent was in him ; he had the lucidity of Browne,

with more of spiritual enthusiasm than Browne and with a staying power which in Browne was wholly lacking. Separatists soon came to be called Barrowists as well as Brownists, but with a significant difference in the titles ; Brownist was a convenient nickname, because it was odious ; the Separatists were called Barrowists, because Barrowe was the able and unwearied exponent of their doctrine. Greenwood, on the other hand, was a typical pastor. He had received, first deacon's and then priest's orders, immediately after graduation, but finding it impossible to be a faithful minister in the Established Church, he came to London, and joined the Separatists. He was styled "clerk" in his indictment ; and at his first examination the following conversation took place.

Question. Are you a minister ?

Answer. I was one according to your orders.

Q. Who degraded you ?

A. I degraded myself, through God's mercy, by repentance. (Meaning when he renounced his episcopal orders, and separated from the established church.)"¹

Penry, again, was the typical evangelist : the impulse which made him a Separatist was compassion for the moral and spiritual degradation of his fellow-countrymen, who—according to the preamble of an Act passed in 1562-3—"are utterly destituted of God's holy word, and do remain in the like, or rather more darkness and ignorance than they were in the time of papistry."² In a "protestation," written by him after his conviction, a week before his death, he gives this account of himself : "I am a poor young man, born and bred in the mountains of Wales. I am the first, since the last springing up of the gospel in this latter age, that publicly laboured to have the blessed seed thereof sown in these barren mountains. I have often rejoiced before my God, as He

¹ Brook. "Lives of the Puritans." Vol. ii. pp. 33, 34.

² Waddington. "Penry, the Pilgrim Martyr." P. 209.

knoweth, that I had the favour to be born and live under her Majesty, for the promoting of this work. . . . And now being to end my days before I am come to the one half of my years, in the likely course of nature, I leave the success of these my labours unto such of my countrymen as the Lord is to raise up after me for the accomplishing of that work which, in the calling of my country unto the knowledge of Christ's blessed gospel, I began."¹ These are exactly the impulses—the constructive, the pastoral, the evangelistic; different yet acting and reacting upon each other—which, ever since, in times of spiritual revival, have brought men from other communities into the Congregational churches.

Of the three men, John Greenwood is the one of whom least is known. We find him first in Cambridge, where he matriculated as a sizar of Corpus Christi College, March 18, 1577-8; he took his bachelor's degree in 1580-1. Having been deprived of his benefice in Norfolk, he accepted a chaplaincy in the family of Lord Rich, brother-in-law of the Earl of Essex, at Rochford Hall, in that county, where a separate church was allowed by the parish clergyman to meet. From Essex he came to London, where he was apprehended in the autumn of 1586, while reading the Scriptures with a small company at Henry Martin's house, in the parish of St. Andrew-in-the-Wardrobe, St. Paul's Churchyard. He was committed first to the Clink, in Southwark, and afterward to the Fleet prison—on the site of which the Memorial Hall now stands—where, without trial, he underwent a close confinement of from five to six years in all. There seems to have been, some time before July, 1588,² and again in 1592, a slight relaxa-

¹ Waddington. "Penry, the Pilgrim Martyr." Pp. 197-8. Dexter, p. 249.

² Cooper ("Athenæ Cantabrigienses," vol. ii. p. 151) is the authority for this statement. He says that after July, 1588, Barrowe and Greenwood never regained their liberty; which, so far as Greenwood is concerned, is not consistent with

tion of rigour in his treatment. He was allowed to live out of prison on bail. In these intervals he was much about among the London Separatists; it was at the latter time that he was chosen to be their doctor or teacher.¹ On December 5, 1592, he was again apprehended, and by committal of Archbishop Whitgift returned to the Fleet. He was tried, March 23, 1592-3, together with Barrowe, for circulating seditious writings, the sedition being words against the order of the Established Church. They were hanged at Tyburn on April 6th.² From Greenwood's answers under examination, we get the impression of a frank-hearted man, of clear intuition and prompt utterance. Bancroft, who was then treasurer and prebendary of St. Paul's and afterward Archbishop of Canterbury, has written, "Greenwood is but a simple fellow; Barrowe is the man." But his simplicity was neither intellectual nor moral weakness. Barrowe was enthusiastically attached to him; in the writings they sent out from the Fleet, Greenwood shewed himself no mean controversialist, although Barrowe took the lead.

Henry Barrowe was the third son of Thomas Barrowe, Esq., of Shipdam, in Norfolk, by his wife Mary, daughter and one of the co-heiresses of Henry Bures, Esq., of Acton, Suffolk. He matriculated as a fellow-commoner of Clare Hall, Cambridge, on November 22, 1566, and proceeded B.A. in 1569-70. He studied law in London, being made a member of Gray's Inn in 1576. He was an impetuous and quick-witted man, with plenty of dry humour, of generous impulses, persistent in purpose, but not always self-

other facts. Waddington and Dexter do not mention the former liberation. See Dexter, p. 232, n. Brook ("Lives of the Puritans," vol. ii. p. 28) shews himself aware of it, but cannot fix its date in relation to the examinations of the prisoners.

¹ Vide p. 46, *antea*.

² Old style, answering to our April 17th. Readers are reminded that when two years are specified (1592-3) for a date in January, February, or March, the former is the year given in contemporary records, the latter is the year according to our reckoning.

possessed. In London he "followed the Court"; he was licentious and a gamester; some of his speeches shew him to have been reckless enough, but he was no hypocrite.¹ The story of his conversion deserves to be recorded in full. "Walking in London one Lord's day with one of his companions, he heard a preacher very loud as they passed by the church. Upon which Mr. Barrowe said unto his consort, 'Let us go in and hear what this man saith that is thus earnest.' 'Tush,' saith the other; 'what! shall we go to hear a man talk?' But in he went, and sat down. And the minister was vehement in reproving sin, and sharply applied the judgments of God against the same; and, it should seem, touched him to the quick in such things as he was guilty of, so as God set it home to his soul, and began to work for his repentance and conviction thereby, for he was so stricken as he could not be quiet, until, by conference with godly men, and further hearing of the word, with diligent reading and meditation, God brought peace to his soul and conscience, after much humiliation of heart and reformation of life. So he left the Court and retired himself to a private life, some time in the country and some time in the city, giving himself to study and reading of the Scriptures and other good works very diligently; and being missed at Court by his consorts and acquaintances, it was quickly hinted abroad that Barrowe was turned Puritan."² His conversion attracted attention. Lord Bacon says, "He made a leap from a vain and dissolute youth to a preciseness in the highest degree, the strangeness of which alteration made him very much spoken of."

The friendship of Greenwood and Barrowe is one of the personally interesting incidents of their history. Under Greenwood's influence Barrowe became a Separatist; it was his devotion to Greenwood which led to Barrowe's imprisonment. Hearing that

¹ Cooper. "Athenæ Cantabrigienses." Vol. ii. p. 151.

² Waddington. "Congregational Martyrs." Pp. 66, 67. Dr. Waddington quotes this story (as usual without reference) from Bradford.

Greenwood was in the Clink, he went there on Sunday morning, November 19th, and when he had spent a short time with him, the gaoler, who had been on the look out for Barrowe, came in and arrested him. Barrowe protested against being apprehended without warrant, but was taken by boat to Lambeth Palace; and the archbishop, after a short interrogation, committed him to prison.

The charges brought against them will be considered a few pages farther on; meanwhile a few extracts from their examinations will increase our personal acquaintance with the men, as well as bring out their doctrine of the Church. Both refused to be sworn on a book, holding any other oath than by the name of God to be idolatrous. They also protested against such questions as would have led to their criminating themselves or accusing their fellow-worshippers. Greenwood, being interrogated about the Book of Common Prayer, replies—

“There are many errors in it; and the form of it is disagreeable to the scriptures.”

“*Archbishop*. Is it contrary to the scriptures?

G. It must needs be contrary, if it be disagreeable.

* * * * *

Q. What say you of the church of England? Is it a true established¹ church of God?”

G. The whole commonwealth is not a church.

Ander. But do you know any true established church in the land?

G. If I did, I would not accuse it unto you.

Q. But what say you? Is not the whole land, as now ordered, a true established church?

G. No, not as the assemblies generally are. If it please you, I will shew you the reasons.

¹ Established; *i.e.*, as we should say, constituted.

Jus. No, you shall have enough to shew hereafter. It is not to be stood upon now.

Q. What do you say of the church of England, as it is governed by bishops? Is it antichristian?

G. According to the bishops, and laws it is now governed by, it is not according to the scriptures.

Winch. Thou hast the scriptures often in thy mouth. Is it antichristian?

G. Yes, I hold it is contrary to Christ's word.

Q. What say you then of the sacraments? Are they true sacraments?

G. No. They are not rightly administered, according to the institution of Christ, nor have they the promise of grace; because you keep not the covenant.

Q. Speak plainly. Are they true sacraments, or not?

G. No, for if you have no true church, you can have no true sacraments."

* * * * *

" *Q.* Do you not hold a parish to be the church?

G. If all the people were faithful, having God's law and ordinances practised among them, I do.

Q. Do you then hold that the parish doth make it no church?

G. No; but the profession which the people make.

Q. Do you hold that the church ought to be governed by a presbytery?

G. Yes, every congregation of Christ ought to be governed by that presbytery which Christ hath appointed.

Q. What are those officers?

G. A pastor, teacher, and elder.

Q. And must the church be governed by no other officers?

G. No, by no others than Christ hath appointed.

Q. May this people and presbytery reform such things as are amiss without the prince?

G. They ought to practise God's laws, and correct vice by the censure of the word.

Q. What if the prince forbid them ?

G. They must, nevertheless, do that which God commandeth."

* * * * *

"Q. What say you of the prince's supremacy ? Is her Majesty supreme head of the church in all causes, as well ecclesiastical as civil ?

G. She is supreme magistrate over all persons, to punish the evil and defend the good.

Q. Is she over all causes ?

G. No. Christ is the only head of his church ; and his laws may no man alter.

Q. But the pope giveth this to princes, doth he not ?

G. No, he doth not. He setteth himself above princes, and exempteth his priesthood from the magistrate's sword.

Q. What say you of the oath of supremacy ? Do you approve of it ?

G. If these ecclesiastical orders mean such as are agreeable to the Scriptures, I do ; for I deny all foreign power.

Q. It means the order and government, with all the laws of the church as it is now established.

G. Then I will not answer to approve of it."

The self-possession of these answers is evident ; their frankness, too, and precision as a declaration of Greenwood's doctrine, without irrelevance or heat. Barrowe was more easily ruffled. On June 18, 1587, the Lord Treasurer introduced his examination ; the prisoner being on his knees before the Archbishop, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer, Lord Buckhurst, the Bishop of London, Justice Young, and others.

"*Treasurer.* Why are you in prison, Barrowe ?

B. I am in prison, my lord, upon the statute made for recusants.

T. Why will you not come to church ?



BARROWE AND WHITGIFT.

B. My whole desire is to come to the church of God.

T. I see thou art a fantastical fellow. But why not come to our churches?

B. My lord, the causes are great and many: as—1. Because all the wicked in the land are received unto the communion. 2. You have a false and an antichristian ministry set over your church. 3. You do not worship God aright, but in an idolatrous and a superstitious manner. And, 4. Your church is not governed by the Testament of Christ, but by the Romish courts and canons.

T. Here is matter enough, indeed. I perceive thou takest delight to be an author of this new religion.

Chancellor. I never heard such stuff in all my life."

After more questions and answers in which both the prisoner and his judges develop heat, the Lord Treasurer comes to the question of the maintenance of the ministry.

"*T.* Do you not hold that it is unlawful to enact a law for ministers to live by tithes, and that the people be required to pay them?

B. My lord, such laws are abrogated and unlawful.

T. Thou would'st have the minister to live upon something. What should he live of?

B. Wholly of alms, as Christ hath ordained, and as he and his apostles lived.

T. How if the people will not give?

B. Such are not the people of God.

T. But what shall the ministers do in the meantime?

B. Not stand as ministers to such, neither live of the goods of the profane.

T. Where canst thou shew me, from scripture, that ministers ought not to live by tithes?

B. Heb. vii. 12; Gal. vi. 6. In the one place, tithes are abrogated; in the other, another kind of provision is made for ministers. The words of the former text are these: "For the

priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law"; and you cannot deny that tithes were a part of that law : as Numb. xviii.

T. Would'st thou have the minister then to have all my goods?

B. No, my lord. But I would have you not withhold your goods from helping him : neither rich nor poor are exempted from this duty."

At this point the examination takes an unhappy turn. From tithes they discuss the priesthood ; and then the Chancellor asks Barrowe about the Bishop of London, and about the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had just before intruded with statements that he had committed Barrowe, and kept him a close prisoner, as a "sower of errors." The scene which ensued Barrowe himself must describe.

"As we were thus reasoning, the *Ld. Chan.* asked me if I knew not those two men (pointing to *Cant.* and *Lond.*).

B. Yes, my lord, I have cause to know them.

Lord Chanc. But what, is not this the Bishop of London?

B. I know him for no Bishop, my lord.

Lord Chanc. What is he then?

B. His name is Elmar, my lord. (The Lord pardon my fault, that I laid him not open for a wolfe, a Bloody persecutor, and *Apostata*. But by this time the Warden's man plucked me up.)

Lord Chanc. What is that man (pointing to *Cant.*)?

B. The Lord gave me the spirit of boldness, so that I answered, 'He is a Monster, a miserable compound, I know not what to make him : he is neither Ecclesiastical nor Civil, even that second Beast spoken of in the Revelation.

Lord Treas. Where is that place? shew it.

B. So I turned to the 13th chapter and began at the 11th verse, and read a little. Then I turned to 2 Thess. ii. But the beast, arose for anger, gnashing his Teeth, and said, 'will you suffer him, my lords?' So I was plucked up the Warden's man

from my knees, and carried away. As I was departing, I desired the Lord Treasurer that I might have the liberty of the ayre, but had no answer ; and I prayed the Lord to blesse their honours. So I was led forth by an other way than I came in, that I might not see the brethren nor they me." ¹

Barrowe, however, carried anger "as the flint bears fire." His modesty and tenderness of conscience appear in a sentence which immediately follows :—"The *Ld. Treas.* admonished me, and told me I took the Lord's name often in vain. I have forgotten upon what occasion he spoke it. But I beseech the Lord that I may not forget this his good admonition, but may set a more careful watch before my lips : for sure no doubt I am greatly guilty that way, and never use His holy name with that reverence I ought."

The first intention of the commissioners does not seem to have been to hang the men, but to win from them a retraction of their opinions, and conformity to the Established Church. Whitgift tried to browbeat them ; the lay commissioners sought to persuade them. Examinations like those from which we have just quoted shewed how vain was such a project ; and then the method of conference was tried. The prisoners were quite willing

¹ "The Examination of Henry Barrowe, John Grenewood, and John Penrie before the high commissioners and Lordes of the Counsel, Penned by the Prisoners themselves before their deaths." Quoted Brook. "Lives of the Puritans." Vol. ii. pp. 25-38; Dexter, pp. 219, 220. Cooper ("Athen. Cant." vol. ii. p. 153) suggests that Aylmer, Bishop of London, who had married Judith Bures, of Suffolk, was Barrowe's uncle. This, and not any superior excellence in Aylmer, who had begun his ministry as a Puritan, and of whom see a story in Mr. Rogers's Tercentenary Tract, "John Robinson" ("Early Independents," p. 86), would account for the mild treatment of him which Barrowe bewails as a fault. The interpretation of the second beast of the Revelation, as a symbol of the assumption by the civil power of ecclesiastical authority, is affirmed by nearly all modern commentators, although they do not make practical applications in the manner of Barrowe.

for this ; they asked, however, that the conferences might be public, which was denied. Cooper says that in hope of conference with some divines they "were enlarged upon bonds, but again offending they were committed to the Fleet, 20th July, 1588." The conferences were now carried on in the prison, Barrowe complaining that the papers on which they made their notes were stolen from them. In one of these conferences occurred an incident, which Dr. Dexter rightly stigmatises as of "insufferable meanness." Barrowe having spoken of his long, close, causeless and illegal imprisonment, Dr. Andrews replied, "For close imprisonment you are most happy. The solitary and contemplative life I hold the most blessed life. It is the life I would choose." To which Barrowe replied, "You speak philosophically, but not Christianly. So sweet is the harmony of God's graces unto me in the congregation and the conversation of the saints at all times, as I think myself as a sparrow on the housetop when I am exiled from them. But could you be content also, Mr. Andrews, to be kept from exercise and air so long together ? These are also necessary to a natural body." "I say not," was the answer, "that I would want air. But——" here, says Dexter, crops out his meanness again—he thinks himself on the verge of the possible discovery of more victims, if he can only be cunning enough to trap them—"but who be these saints you speak of, where are they ?" "They are even those poor Christians whom you so blaspheme, and persecute, and now most unjustly hold in your prisons." "But where is their congregation ?" "Though I knew, I purposed not to tell you."

From prison Greenwood, and especially Barrowe, sent out many pamphlets, controversial and expository. They were written, one sheet at a time, and smuggled out of the cell, for printing, mostly in Holland ; one of them, "Greenwood's Reply to Dr. Some," by the itinerant press which struck off the Marprelate tracts that from 1588 were causing such confusion to the Epis-



THE CRUEL REPRIEVE OF BARROWE AND GREENWOOD.

copal party. As stringent laws had been passed against the publication of unlicensed writings, it was easy to induce the Queen to sanction extreme measures; and after Greenwood's renewed incarceration, in December, 1592, they were put on trial with the intention, on Whitgift's part, of hanging them.

The statute under which they were tried was one adopted in 1581, under fear of a Catholic rising in aid of a Spanish invasion. The statute made it felony, punishable by death without benefit of clergy, to publish seditious writings to the defamation of the Queen's Majesty, or to the stirring up of insurrection or rebellion. No serious attempt was ever made to hold them guilty of any sedition other than that involved in speaking against the established ecclesiastical order. In their previous examinations, crafty questions had been put as to the right of subjects to excommunicate their prince; but they had made it clear that by excommunication they only meant what we now understand by suspension from church fellowship. The Attorney-General now sought to draw from words in which they had spoken of God's judgments as imminent on an unchristian nation complicity with the invading Spaniards. But this was only a rhetorical artifice: his serious charge went no farther than that they intended the overthrow of the church, the abolishing of her Majesty's supremacy, the suppression of the bishops, and the decay of the crown by taking all the tithes and impropriations. This, and no other, was the charge brought against them; every one understood that this was the charge on which they were found guilty and left for execution.

No long time was allowed to elapse between their sentence and their punishment. They were tried March 23, 1592-3. "Upon the 24th, early in the morning," writes Barrowe, "was preparation made for our execution: we, brought out of the Limbo, our irons smitten off, and we ready to be bound to the cart; when her Majesty's most gracious pardon came for our reprieve." Further

conference of certain doctors and deans was tried with them ; but they would yield nothing except what could be proved wrong in disputation. "Upon the last day of the third month," again writes Barrowe, "my brother Greenwood and I were very early and secretly conveyed to the place of execution, where being tied by the necks to the tree, we were permitted to speak a few words." Again they were reprieved. On the 6th of April, "as early and secretly" as was possible, they were taken for the last time from their cells, carried to Tyburn, and hanged ; "two aged widows, who attended them in prison, were permitted to follow them to the gallows with winding sheets." Greenwood, the younger man, left a widow with one child. Barrowe, who was always "very comfortable to the poor, and those in distress in their sufferings, when he saw that he must die, gave a stock for the relief of the poor of the church, which was a good help to them in their banished condition afterwards." ¹

A letter in the State Paper Office ² throws some light on these proceedings, both the futile reprieve and the sudden execution. It is from Thos. Philippes to Wm. Sterrell. "A bill was preferred against the Barrowists and Brownists, making it felony to maintain any opinions against the Ecclesiastical government, which, by means of the bishops, passed the Upper House, but was found so captious by the Lower House, that it was thought that it never would have passed in any sort, and that all the Puritans would have been drawn within its compass, but by earnest labouring of those who sought to satisfy the bishops' humours, it is passed to this effect, that whoever is an obstinate recusant, refuses to come to church, and denies the Queen's power in ecclesiastical causes, or is a keeper of conventicles, being convicted, is to abjure the realm within three months, and lose all his goods and lands ; if he

¹ Dexter. "Congregationalism." Lecture iv. Waddington. "Congregational Martyrs."

² S. P. Dom. Eliz. ccxlv. Quoted from the Calendar.



PETERHOUSE, CAMBRIDGE (*John Penry's College*).

return without licence, it shall be felony ; they think that then it will not reach any man deserving favour.¹

“Barrowe and Mr. Goodman (*sic*), with others, condemned upon the statute for writing and publishing seditious books, were to have been executed last week, but as they were ready to be trussed up, they were respited ; but the day after the Lower House had shewed their dislike of this bill, they were hanged early in the morning. The reprieve was through a supplication to the Lord Treasurer, that in a land where no papist was put to death for religion, theirs should not be the first blood shed who concurred about faith with what was professed in the country, and desired conference to be convinced of their errors. The Lord Treasurer spoke sharply to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was very peremptory, and also to the Bishop of Worcester, and wished him to speak to the Queen, but none seconded him. The executions proceeded through malice of the bishops to the Lower House, which makes them much hated by the people affected that way.”

John Penry, who was arrested the day before the trial of Greenwood and Barrowe, was a Breconshire man, born in 1559, at Cefnbrith, in the neighbourhood of Builth. He came up to Cambridge, where he matriculated as an undersizar at Peterhouse, December 3, 1580, proceeding B.A. in 1583-4. He was a Roman Catholic in the first years of his college life, exhibiting the same fervour in behalf of the old faith which he subsequently displayed in the cause of evangelical religion. At Cambridge he came under Puritan influences ; John Udal made his acquaintance at this time. Barrowe, who was now in London, and Greenwood,

¹ It was in a speech against this bill that Sir Walter Raleigh used the often quoted words, that he feared there were more than twenty thousand Brownists in England. “When they be gone,” said he, “who shall maintain their wives and children?”

who was on the eve of graduation when Penry matriculated, would probably not be among his University friends. From Cambridge he went to Oxford, where also Puritanism was vigorous. He entered St. Alban's Hall, taking his M.A. degree on July 11, 1586. His attainments as a scholar were more than respectable; Wood says that learned and sober men did answer most, or all of his books, "because they knew Penry to have more than ordinary learning in him."¹ It was, however, as a preacher, edifying and arousing, that he was best known.

Penry, like Whitfield, like so many of the Welsh ministers of the Evangelical Revival, like the Apostle Paul, was a wanderer; he went from place to place, preaching and trying to arouse others to preach. We find him in Breconshire, where "to this day four churches in the neighbourhood of Llangamarch trace their origin to his personal efforts";² in Northamptonshire, where he married Helen Godly, of Northampton; then in Surrey, at Moulsey, where the peripatetic press which sent out the Marprelate tracts was being worked by Waldegrave, and, hard by Kingston-on-Thames, where his friend Udal was minister. Penry used this press to appeal to the English parliament and people for the evangelisation of Wales. "Thousands of our people," he said, "know Jesus Christ to be neither God nor man, priest nor prophet, almost never heard of him. Preaching itself in many parts is quite unknown. In some places a sermon is read once in three months."³ In his movements about England, and his intercourse with the Puritans, he found what may have surprised him, that England was not much better off than Wales for gospel preaching; and he identified himself with those of the Puritan party who were prepared to

¹ Wood. "*Athenæ Oxonienses*." (1691.) Vol. i. p. 229.

² Waddington. "Penry, the Pilgrim Martyr." P. 9. Quoted from Rev. D. Morgan's MSS.

³ Waddington. "Congregational History." P. 28.

break the ecclesiastical law rather than tolerate this state of things.

Penry very soon became a marked man. He was known to use the Marprelate press; he was suspected of being Martin himself; the officers were after him, and in 1589 he fled to Scotland. Several ministers from that country had been in Oxford two years before Penry had entered St. Alban's Hall, to stimulate Puritanism in the University; their influence had been such that, after graduating, Penry declined episcopal ordination, contenting himself with the license of University preacher. So he betook himself to Scotland in his time of danger; and for three years he found hospitality, protection, and honour there. His love of Scotland comes out in letters written on the eve of his trial. "Salute all ours in Scotland," he says, in a letter to his wife, "upon the borders, and every way northward." To his children, the eldest of whom was not four years old, he wrote a letter to be read "when they come to years of discretion and understanding," which contains this clause—"Shew yourselves helpful and kind unto all strangers, and unto the people of Scotland, where I, your mother, and a couple of you, lived as strangers, and yet were welcome, and found great kindness for the name of our God. Be tender-hearted toward the widow and the fatherless, both because the law of God and nature requireth this at your hands, and also because, for aught I know, I am likely to leave you fatherless, and your mother a widow."¹ Queen Elizabeth wrote an autograph letter to her "dear brother, the King of Scotland," calling on him to stop the mouths, or make shorter the tongues, of such ministers as dared to pray in their pulpits for the persecuted in England for the gospel; and not to give more harbour room to vagabond traitors and seditious inventors, but to return them to me, or banish them from your land." The letter was to be supplemented by particular information given to James by the bearer; and as

¹ Waddington. "Penry, the Pilgrim Martyr." P. 143.

the result, the King issued a decree of banishment against Penry. The ministers of Scotland, however, would not lend themselves to this decree ; " everywhere they stayed the proclaiming thereof." ¹

In September, 1592, Penry was back in London, intending to seek an interview with the Queen, or some of her Council, that he might clear himself of the charge of sedition, and then to go to Wales. Up to this time he had been a Puritan ; now he joined the Separatists. They would have chosen him to office in the church ; but this he declined, as he thought he was to be in London only a short time. He was apprehended at Ratcliffe, March 22, 1592-3, and committed to the Counter in the Poultry, next day.

In his examination before Mr. Fanshawe and Justice Young occur the following statements ; which shew how cordially he had adopted the Separatist doctrine, and shed further light on the customs of the persecuted church.

" *F.* What office had you in your church, which meets in woods, and I know not where ?

P. I have no office in that poor congregation. And as to our meeting in woods, or elsewhere, we have the example of Jesus Christ, and his church and servants in all ages, for our warrant. It is against our wills that we go into woods and secret places."

* * * * *

" *F.* What calling have you to preach ? Were you never made a minister according to the order of this land ?

P. Had I been willing, I might have been made either deacon or priest ; but, I thank the Lord, I ever disliked these popish orders ; and, if I had taken them, I would utterly refuse them. I have taught publicly in the church of Scotland, being thereunto earnestly desired, and called by the order of that church. I never had any charge ; and therefore I never bore any office, either there or in any other church.

¹ Waddington. " Penry, the Pilgrim Martyr." Pp. 57-59.

F. Did you not preach in these your secret meetings? What warrant had you so to do, if you never had any public office in your church?

P. Whether I did or not, I do not at present tell you. But this I say, that if the same poor congregation desired to have the use of my small gifts for edification and consolation, I would, being thereunto prepared, most willingly bestow my poor talents for their mutual edification and mine.

F. And may you teach publicly in the church, having no public office therein?

P. I may, because I am a member thereof, and requested thereunto by the church, and judged to be, in some measure, endowed with suitable gifts for handling the word of God. The church or body of Christ, ought to have the use of all the gifts that are in any of its members, and the member cannot deny unto the body the use of those graces with which it is furnished, without breaking the laws and order of the body, and thus become unnatural: As Rom. xii., 1 Cor. xii.

F. Then every one that will may preach the word in your assemblies?

P. Not so. For we hold it unlawful for any man to intermeddle with the Lord's holy truth, beyond the bounds of his gifts; or for him who is endowed with gifts to preach or teach in the church, except he be desired and called thereto by the body of the church.

F. May any person, then, preach who hath no office so to do?

P. Yes, that he may; and the word of God bindeth every one to preach who intendeth to become a pastor or teacher in the church of Christ, even before he take upon him this office.

F. What office hath he all this time?

P. No other office than the other members of the body have, who are bound to perform their several operations in the body,

according to that measure of grace which they have received from the Lord Jesus." ¹

Some further questions and answers from the same examination reveal the desire of the justices to draw from Penry material to support a charge of sedition.

F. You labour to draw her majesty's subjects from their obedience to her laws, and from the church of England to hear you, and such as you, teaching in woods.

P. Nay ; I persuade all men to obey my prince and her laws. Only I dissuade all the world from yielding obedience and subjection to the ordinances of antichrist, and persuade them to be subject to Jesus Christ and his laws : I know this to be agreeable to the laws of her majesty.

F. What ! Is it meet that subjects should charge their prince to keep covenant with them ? Where do you find this warranted in scripture ?

P. The subjects are in a most lamentable state, if they may not allege their prince's laws for what they do ; yea, and shew what their prince hath promised to the Lord, and to them, when this is done to prove their own innocency. It is the honour of princes so to hold and be in covenant with their subjects, that they will preserve them from violence and wrong. And I am assured that, if her majesty knew the equity and uprightness of our cause, we should not receive the hard treatment we now sustain. We and our cause are never brought before her, except in the odious names of sedition, rebellion, schism, heresy, &c. It is, therefore, no wonder to see the edge of the sword turned against us."

The constitutional questions tried and settled in the Revolutions of the next century were thus anticipated by Penry. After some examination about the desire of the Separatists to "pull down bishops"; to which Penry replies that they only labour for them-

¹ Brook. "Lives of the Puritans." Vol. ii. pp. 54-56.

selves, to avoid all corruptions in religion, and dare not so much as in thought, attempt to alter or pull down anything established by law ; Justice Young puts a question—

“ *Young.* But what meant you, Penry, when you told me at my house, that I should live to see when there should not be a lord bishop left in England ?

P. You, sir, do me great injury, but I am content to bear it. I said, ‘ because God hath promised to overthrow and consume the remnants of the kingdom of antichrist, you may live to see all the offices, callings, livings, and works, belonging to that kingdom, utterly overthrown.’ This is what I said, and I beseech and charge you, as you shall answer in the day of judgment, not to misreport my speech.

Y. I conceived some great matter of your speech, I tell you.

P. In this you did me the greater wrong. I pray you, hereafter, take my words according to my meaning, and their natural signification.”¹

On the 21st of May he was put upon his trial. He was charged under two indictments ; one for having spoken and written against the Queen, the other for having spoken and written against the magistrates, ministers, and people. In support of the charges nothing which he had spoken or written in England could be proved against him. The prosecution found among his papers the rough draft of the heads of a petition, written three years before in Edinburgh, for presentation, after revision, to Queen Elizabeth. It contained among other statements these two—“ The last days of your reign are turned rather against Jesus Christ and his gospel, than to the maintenance of the same. I have great cause of complaint, madam ; nay, the Lord and his church have cause to complain, of your government : because we, your subjects this day, are not permitted to serve our God under your government according to his word ; but are sold to be bond-slaves,

¹ Brook. Pp. 56-58.

not only to our affections, to do what we will, so that we keep ourselves within the compass of established civil laws, but also to be servants of the man of sin and his ordinances." "Among the rest of the princes under the gospel, that have been drawn to oppose it, you must think yourself to be one; for until you see this, madam, you see not yourself, and they are but sycophants and flatterers, whosoever tell you otherwise. Your standing is, and has been, by the gospel. It is little beholden to you for anything that appears. The practice of your government shews, that if you could have ruled without the gospel, it would have been doubtful whether the gospel should be established or not; for now that you are established in your throne by the gospel, you suffer it to reach no farther than the end of your sceptre limiteth unto it." ¹

These are plain words, but they do not overstate the facts. The correspondence of the various envoys at the Court of Queen Elizabeth, so abundantly quoted by Mr. Froude, reveal that she was deliberately prepared, so soon as she safely could, to sacrifice the Protestant Reformation in England and Holland for the purpose of reconciliation with the Pope.² Penry did not plead this; he could not have pleaded it. But he raised another plea which seems to us of unanswerable force. The document on which the indictments were founded was a strictly private paper. It bore on its face indications that it was only a rough draft for his own future consideration. The act of writing it had been performed in Scotland, nor had Penry published it in England. It was not presented; he had never alluded to it in conversation with his most intimate friends; no publication of it had taken place until it was carried from his lodgings by the officers of the court; if it was a seditious libel, which is very questionable, even

¹ Waddington. "Penry, the Pilgrim Martyr." Pp. 183-4. The whole document is given in Neal. "History of the Puritans" (1822). Vol. i. pp. 438-9.

² See, among many other passages, Froude, vol. viii. pp. 330-1; vol. xi. p. 25; 61.



MARTYRDOM OF JOHN PENRY, MAY 29, 1593.

according to Elizabethan law, the publishers of the libel were those who had made use of it against Penry's will. Brook and Neal were not wholly favourable to the Separatists, but they understood the principles of civil and religious liberty, and here is their comment on the trial—"It was, indeed, never known till this time, that a minister and a scholar was condemned to death for private papers found in his study ; nor do I remember, says Mr. Neal, more than one instance since that time, in whose case it was given for law, that to write has been construed an overt act. But it seems Mr. Penry must die, right or wrong."¹ The jury found him guilty, and he was sentenced to be hanged without delay. He was tried May 21st, formally sentenced to death on the 25th ; the death-warrant was signed on the 29th ; he was told, when at dinner, that he was to die in the afternoon at four ; at five he was taken to St. Thomas-a-Watering, on the Surrey side, and in presence of a very few of his friends, who were not allowed to come near to bid him farewell or hear his dying words, he was hanged.

The tenderness and dauntlessness of his spirit came out during the days of his imprisonment. He has left no provision for his wife but the fidelity of his God and the love of the church to which he had joined himself ; he thinks of his "mess of four fatherless children," the eldest not yet four years old, and leaves them a Bible each ; he comforts and counsels the church under its affliction. "If my blood," he says, "were an ocean sea, and every drop thereof were a life unto me, I would give them all, by the help of the Lord, for the maintenance of my confession. Yet, if any error can be shewed therein, that will I not maintain." He dies with a protestation of loyalty to his Queen upon his lips. Penry had not the composure of Greenwood, nor the hardihood of Barrowe ; the quick impressibility of the Celt, which lends vividness to his speech, makes both his condemnation of Elizabeth

¹ Brook. Vol. ii. p. 65.

and his utterances of confidence in her appear excessive. But there is no reason to doubt his sincerity. He would have been content to leave his life in her hands could he but have pleaded his own cause ; and his confidence was not simply reliance on the justice of his cause, it was also reliance on her sense of right. In the substance of his contention he never wavered. The pathos of the three martyrdoms culminates in the death of Penry ; the tenderness with which the records of these events linger around his closing days is not misplaced.

The authorship of the Marprelate tracts has been the occasion of almost as much controversy as that of the letters of Junius, and for the same reason, because they so profoundly affected public feeling. I do not enter into this thorny dispute, but the story of these trials would not be complete without a few words on the subject. Penry was believed by all the Episcopal party to be Martin Marprelate. In one of the examinations of John Udal, a Puritan minister, not a Brownist, who died in the Marshalsea two years after, he is asked directly about Penry's authorship. Wood includes the tracts among Penry's writings. A letter from William Sterrell to C. Paget, dated June 12, 1593, says—"Penry, son of Martin Marprelate, was hanged lately, as two of the principal Brownists, Barrow and Greenwood, were hanged before, so that that sect is in effect extinguished."¹ It is now generally admitted, by Episcopalians as well as by Nonconformists, that Penry was not Martin. But he was probably intimately connected with the publication. He used the same press, directed the printers ; and some of the damaging statements against the clergy, contained in the tracts, may have been furnished by him. The special warrant of the privy council, under which Penry was arrested, was issued in 1590, under the excitement produced by the reading of the tracts.

¹ S. P. Dom. Eliz. ccxlv. Quoted from the calendar. The letter is in the handwriting of Thomas Philippes, the draughtsman.

Churche to comfort my blood when my pen can shew. I never can
stand more a lyfe unto mee I would give to shew till the day of judgement
Lord for thy mercies sake of thy name my confession. Yet if thy
word can be covered by me, that will I not minisone.

God with farr be it, that thy pen shew of my larger lyfe, for
myard to be in nature I ought to have unto the inward of fate
of a good friend in Nature. I know good that I have to be an infant
of thyself I am not 4 years old in thyself I am not 4 years old
infant to me be thy song all of God be thy contrary unto my conscience,
to keep my conscience. The Lord of thyself will make thyself
unto thyself.

And therefore my blood were an Ocean Sea and every drop thereof were a lyfe unto me, I would give them all by the help of the
Lord for the maintenance of the same my confession. Yet if any error can be shewed therein, that will I not mainteyne.

Otherwise farr be it, that either the saving of an earthly lyfe, the regard wh in nature I ought to have unto the desolate outward
estate of a poore friendlesse wydowe and four poore fatherlesse infants whereof the eldest is not 4 yeares old or any other outward
thing should enforce mee by the denyall of God's truth contrary unto my conscience, to leese (lose) myne owne soule. The Lord I trust will
never give mee over unto this sinne.

It was not, however, for writing them that Penry was tried ; nor was it ever intended by the law advisers of the crown to indict him under such a charge. They at first meant to indict him for other books, which had been published in his name ; but after receiving the heads of a defence drawn up by counsel, challenging the application of the statute, the court feared an argument at law, and set aside this indictment. How hard up the prosecution was for material for an indictment appears in a suggestion made by the bishops, but rejected by the lawyers, that Penry's recognition of Barrowe and Greenwood as "martyrs" was itself a seditious libel, as well as in their electing to proceed on a private paper taken from him. The Marprelate tracts were indeed the occasion of his death, because they had infuriated the bishops. Of the tracts themselves it may be said distinctly, they are offensive both in taste and temper. But the manners of the sixteenth century were not those of the nineteenth century ; the Marprelate tracts are rather better in these respects than the controversial pamphlets of John Milton ; and no one thinks that Milton should have been executed. The terrible pressure under which they were produced must be borne in mind. "In many respects," says Professor Arber, "they were the attempt of wit to fight (though at desperate odds) against cruelty for permission to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. Persons who decide moral questions on æsthetic grounds are likely to drop into cynicism ; and it is cynical to hint that Penry's connection with the tracts was any excuse for hanging him. Anthony Wood was no friend to either Puritans or Separatists, but he was an honest man, of shrewd common sense, and in his judgment those best met the Marprelate tracts who did not take them too seriously. He speaks of grave answers to them, and of answers "which were written in a buffooning style" ; and adds "that these buffooneries and pasquils did more *non-plus* Penry and his disciples, and so consequently made their doctrine more ridiculous among the common sort, than any grave or learned

answer could do." The Marprelate Tracts are Puritan rather than Separatist in tone. At the time of his association with the press, Penry was a Puritan, not a Separatist. Although his examination included his connection with the Separatist church, this was introduced to prejudice the case ; his indictment was for an offence committed when he was a Puritan. His writings at that time would have been repudiated by the Separatists ; notably, his proposal that preachers should be sent out by the ecclesiastical authorities and paid from the church revenues.

The most painful feature in these trials is the part taken in them by the bishops. The gossip of the Court was that Barrowe, Greenwood, and Penry were sacrificed to "the malice of the bishops" ; and stories were long current among the people that Whitgift used his personal influence with the Queen to prevent the exercise of the royal prerogative of mercy. Those examinations were the most tranquil in which only lawyers were on the bench ; the interference of Whitgift, Aylmer, and the rest, was sure to inflame the process and make it unfair. The court which examined the prisoners was the High Commission, spoken of by historians so different as Hume and Lingard in the same terms—"a real Inquisition, attended with similar iniquities and cruelties" ; "the chief difference consisted in their names. One was the court of Inquisition, the other of High Commission." In trying Puritans and Separatists Whitgift sometimes sat alone, so much did the other lords of the Privy Council resent the procedure. Lord Burghley wrote in strong terms against Whitgift's method of examination ; "he thought the inquisitors of Spain used not so many questions to comprehend and to trap their prey."¹ Whitgift's name was the first attached to the warrant for Penry's execution ; and so ashamed was the Court at the loyal demeanour of the victims, and the patent fact that they suffered for their religion,

¹ Hallam. "Constitutional History." (1832.) Vol. i. p. 273.

that henceforth proceedings were taken under the statute of the 35th Elizabeth, which only banished the Brownists, not under that of the 23rd Elizabeth, which hanged them. The prisoners, not the judges, were on the side of godly learning and piety. Whitgift did not know his Greek Testament ; and ignorance of Bible language more than once betrayed the commissioners into cruel misapprehension of the prisoners' meaning. The moral conduct of the clergy whom the bishops favoured was often shameless ; and the Episcopal bench was notorious for rapacity. Parker, before Whitgift the Queen's favourite Archbishop, had established a fixed tariff for the sale of livings in his gift, and boys had been allowed to become purchasers if they paid an increased price. The timber of the sees was sold ; long leases were given, on heavy fines, of the Episcopal lands ; the sees waxed poor, while the bishops laid up large fortunes. The mutual determination of the Crown and the Episcopate to defend each other against reformers degraded both. The continuous history of the English Episcopate includes a long period in which religion would have perished from the land had it not been for the Nonconforming clergy and the Separatist churches.





CHAPTER IV.

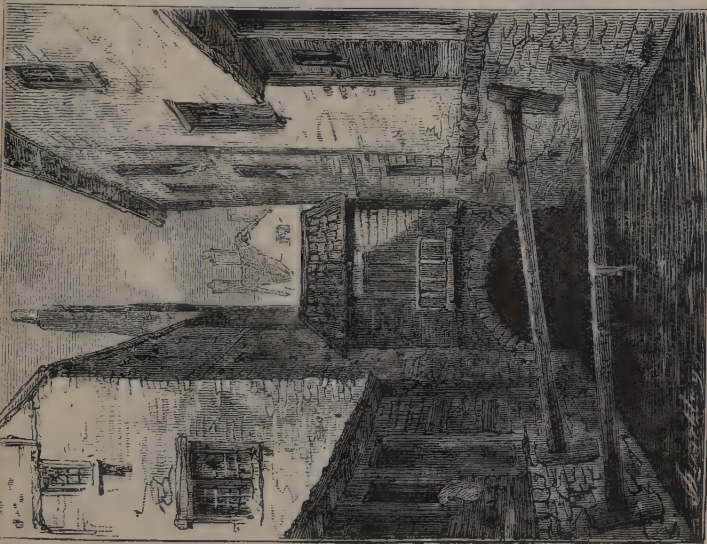
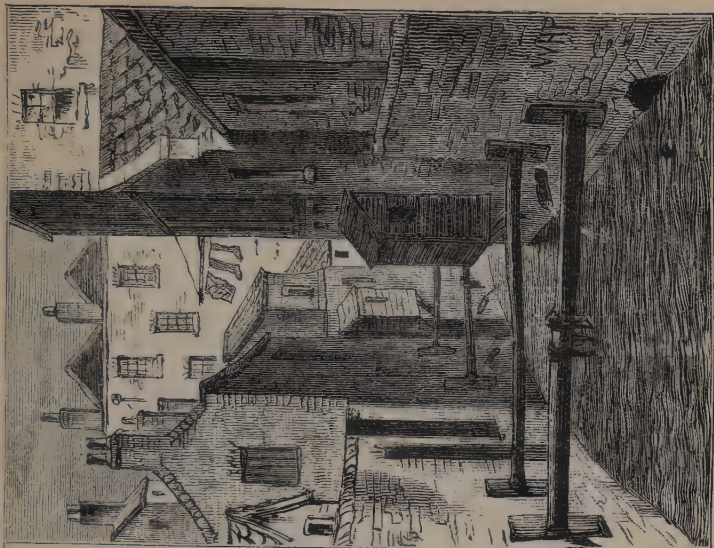
THE SEPARATISTS IN EXILE.

THE sect of the Separatists "is in effect extinguished," said Sterrell, in his letter to Paget reporting the execution of Penry, Barrowe, and Greenwood. To us, who remember the history of England during the next three centuries—the seventeenth, in which the Independents hindered the imposition of a national Presbyterian Church, and brought Charles I. to the scaffold; the eighteenth, in which Independency became synonymous with Evangelical Nonconformity; the nineteenth, in which the legislature has adopted the principle of separating the Church from the State, and the Congregational idea, that spiritual affinity is the basis of Christian fellowship, has leavened all the Protestant churches—the statement reads like a grotesque attempt at prophecy. But it was not an unnatural thing for a courtier to say. No one can imagine the invincible hold any particular truth has of the conscience, but those to whom that truth appears as a conviction: that Protestantism had defied imprisonment, banishment, and the stake, the history of the sixteenth century had taught even courtiers; it remained to be seen whether this new doctrine of the spirituality of the visible church could inspire the Separatists with equal fortitude.

Barrowe and Greenwood had many companions in bondage ; indeed, a large proportion of the London church was undergoing a ruthless persecution. Memorials were issued by them, in which they asked, not for mercy but for speedy trial ; and from these memorials we can form some estimate of what the little community was enduring. A list issued in May or June, 1588, contains the names of twenty-five who had been committed to the Fleet, the Clink, the Counter in the Poultry, the Counter in Wood Street, Newgate, and Bridewell ; of these some had been in prison many weeks, two had died of " the infection of the prison," and two had been bailed, one " being very sick." ¹ Later on, while Barrowe and Greenwood were still awaiting trial, the names of fifty-nine in the jails before mentioned and in the Gatehouse, and the White Lion, were attached to a petition to the Lord Treasurer ; and ten others are said to have died of the prison fever. In 1592, fifty-six were arrested at once, at a meeting in Islington, and brought up for examination. A memorial in favour of " mercie and unitie," drawn up by the persecuted church, within a month of Barrowe and Greenwood's death, speaks of " more than three score poore prisoners now shut up in the several gaols and prisons of this most noble city." Dr. Dexter has drawn out, mainly from the preface to " The True Confession, &c., of those falsely called Brownists," published in 1596, a list of twenty-two who died in the prisons, and of three who were discharged " sick unto death " to die soon after. ² Most of these prisoners were humble working people ; they speak of suffering

¹ The Fleet river or Fleet ditch, the town drain, flowed by the Fleet prison ; Bridewell was at the angle of Fleet and Thames.

² " Sketch of the Marprelate Controversy." English Scholars' Library. Pp. 38-40. Neal. Vol. i. pp. 432-3. Waddington. P. 81. Harleian MSS. 6848. Art. i. Dexter. P. 207. In the three lists quoted, sixty-nine names are given by Neal, six are given by Arber only, and eleven only by Dexter ; a total in these lists of eighty-six names. The largest number estimated as present at any of the services is not above from two to three hundred.



FLEET DITCH.

"hunger and famine" in the jails, and of the extreme poverty in which their wives and children are left. They tell how they are thrust into the smallest and darkest cells, the better cells being reserved for papists and felons; some have irons on their limbs; others are beaten with cudgels because they will not attend the chaplain's services. There is one thing, however, of which we do not read; there is no sign of wavering in their religious conviction.

The story of Francis Johnson shews how the Separatist doctrines spread. Johnson was a Puritan, a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and a popular preacher in the University, who for a sermon in St. Mary's was convened before the Vice-Chancellor and the heads of houses, and committed to prison. He was liberated in order to make a public recantation; but his recantation not being thought satisfactory, he was expelled the University, and again imprisoned. Sixty-eight members of the University petitioned in his favour; and he was allowed to go to Middleburgh, where he became pastor of a Puritan church. Among the works sent out from the Fleet by Barrowe and Greenwood, was a "*Plaine Refutation of M. Giffard's Booke intituled, A short Treatise against the Donatistes of England*"; and this was printed at Dort. Johnson, in his zeal against Separatism, confiscated the whole impression under the authority of the magistrates, and publicly burnt all but two copies. Glancing into the book, "that he might see their errors," he was struck with something worth considering; and carefully read the whole. He gave up his charge and started for London; went to talk to Barrowe in the Fleet; and by conversation with him became persuaded that the book he had burned was the truth. He returned no more to Middleburgh, but joined the little church in London, of which he was chosen pastor when Greenwood was chosen teacher. He afterward supervised the printing in Holland of a new edition of the book, which he issued at his own cost.

Nor did the process of conversion stop here. Henry Jacob, an Oxford man, styled by Wood "a person most excellently well read in theological authors, but withal a most zealous Puritan,"¹ engaged in a discussion with Johnson, who was then in the Clink. Although he did not at that time accept the Separatist position, he was so dissatisfied with his own that he resigned his living at Cheriton, in Kent; and retired to Middleburgh, where "he collected a church among the English exiles, over which he continued pastor for several years."² About the year 1610 he went to Leyden, and "enjoyed much familiar intercourse with Mr. John Robinson." In 1616, Jacob returned to London, where he reorganised the Separatist community in Southwark; which still exists as the "Church of the Pilgrim Fathers," in the New Kent Road. Jacob was a man of clear intellect and a broad spirit. His son calls him "the first Independent in England." He, with Robinson, belongs to the second period in the history of Separatism; when the constructive, Congregational, idea of the church came to be asserted as of equal importance with the protesting, Separatist, idea which had hitherto formed almost the whole of the contention.

All the persons of whom we have hitherto been speaking were University men, scholarly men, some of them scholars. The main attraction of the Separatists was, however, their spiritual power. Because the gospel was preached, and the fellowship of believing souls was felt to be a saving influence, "the common people" were won. In the memorial already referred to of the persecuted church, there are some touching paragraphs. They affirm their orthodox Protestantism, and their loyalty to the Queen and commonwealth; and their desire also that the glory of God may shine more and more in the nation by increase of true holiness and godliness in all the people, with entire and fervent love to

¹ Wood. "Ath. Oxon." Vol. i. p. 394.

² Brook. Vol. ii. p. 332.

Him, our Queen and one another, under the long and prosperous reign of Elizabeth. They speak of their assurance that the Queen had in mercy prolonged "our deare Mr. Barrowe's and Mr. Greenwood's life, when the Instruments, and man and sheetes and flowers and grave, of death were all prepared, and they reddie (as they had lived together Two Turtles) to yeld up their spirits together (like Two lambs) in all meekness and obedience." Then they present this petition to the Privy Council, the Judges, the Lord Mayor and the Justices.

"Ye reverend magistrates, ye gods (so called in scriptures) because you are in his stead to do righteous judgments upon the earth ; hath not the Almighty given you understanding to try the depth of all attempts within this land ? We trust he hath. Oh, search us deeper then, try our ways, and if none can allege anything against us, save only this one error (if it be such) touching the law of our God,¹ deal tenderly with tender consciences. We are yet persuaded that we should shew ourselves disobedient and unthankful to our Maker, except we hold fast this cause. You know not how rich his mercy hath been unto us ; for we verily suppose that you never offended his divine majesty so much, or so often as most of us have done, like that prodigal child ; yea, like Mary Magdalin. But he hath washed us and cleansed us, and given us unspeakable joy and peace of conscience since we came to this company. Marvel not, then, at our state ; but pity us and help us, wherein you know it to be amiss. Behold a people wholly bent and vowed to serve the God of heaven in that course which they may perceive to be most tending to holiness and righteousness. If your honours and worships can bring any to shew us that we shall do more true service to our God, our Queen, and country, by coming to the parish assemblies ; verily, we will hearken to them without obstinacy, and so that some of you would be the witnesses and judges. Alas, it is not our worldly ease to

¹ Like poore Daniel's case, Chap. vi. 5 *id est*.

be thus tossed as we are, it is only this matter of conscience that causeth all our sufferings, and those troubles with us."¹

A memorial like this deserves to be recorded along with the testimony of the more gifted souls. Leaders can do nothing except with men worthy to be led. The cleansed conscience, the spiritual experience of persons who felt that they were being saved by the new doctrine, had even more to do with its endurance and ultimate triumph than the clear thinking and the courage which reasoned conviction inspires.

There were no more executions after the hanging of Barrowe, Greenwood, and Penry. The resentment of the House of Commons at the persecuting temper of the Bishops, and the stir of indignation in the London populace, warned the prelates that they were going too far; they had to be content with the Act which condemned those who refused to come to church, deniers of the Queen's power in ecclesiastical causes, and keepers of conventicles, to suffer the loss of all their goods and lands, and to abjure the realm within three months of their conviction. The process called "abjuring the realm" was one of self-banishment. It differed from the transportation of later years in that the exiles might choose their place of exile; but it was not a voluntary expatriation; for if the convict returned without license it was counted felony, the punishment of which was death without benefit of clergy. The Act was directed against the leaders of the Separatists; it affected them all; many families went with their preachers and elders that they might enjoy elsewhere the liberty of Christian living denied them in their own land.

The martyr church has now become a banished church. The Rev. Joseph Hunter,² to whom we owe the identification of Scrooby as the original home of the Pilgrim Fathers and a large

¹ Harleian MSS. 6848. Art. 1. Quoted by Waddington. P. 96.

² "Founders of New Plymouth." P. 5.

amount of information about the men themselves, thinks the term Pilgrims as applied to them affected and philologically improper. "A pilgrim," he says, "is a person who goes in a devout spirit to visit a shrine . . . these founders when they sought the shores of America were proceeding to no object of this kind, and even leaving it to the winds and the waves to drive them to any point on an unknown and unmarked shore." The term was, however, in use before 1620 and the voyage of the *Mayflower*. Penry uses it of his wanderings in England and his banishment in Scotland. "We are so far from hunting after the wages of unrighteousness that we freely confess ourselves to be but pilgrims and strangers upon earth; and therefore travel towards that heavenly city which our God hath prepared for us."¹ The classical passage—the passage from which the term came to be commonly applied to the men of the *Mayflower*—is probably the sentence in which Bradford describes the exit from Leyden. "So they left that goodly and pleasant city, which had been their resting-place near twelve years; but they knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lifted up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits."² It is the spirit of their sojourn in Holland as well as that of their embarkation for America, their habitual temper, which Bradford is depicting. The historical reference was to an event far more venerable than the crusades; they were thinking of the call of Abram and the patriarchal story, and of the application given it by Peter, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, to the troubled life of Christian fidelity.

Here, too, the story attaches itself to the history of the faithful in Mary's time. While the martyrs for Protestantism were in English prisons, and those who afterward became the Puritan leaders were, for safety of their lives, in various continental cities;

¹ Waddington. "Penry, the Pilgrim Martyr." P. 65.

² Waddington. "Congregational History." P. 211.

there were many indistinguished believers who went away from home to enjoy freedom of conscience. One of Philpot's letters, from prison, is written "to certain godly women, forsaking their own country, and going beyond the seas, in the time of persecution, for the testimony of the gospel."¹ "I read in the evangelists," says Philpot, "of certain godly women that ministered unto Christ, following him in the days of his passion, and never forsook him, but, being dead in his grave, brought oil to anoint him, until that he had shewed himself unto them after his resurrection, and bidden them shew unto his disciples, which at his passion were dispersed, and tell them that he was risen, and that they should see him in Galilee. To whom I may justly compare you (my loving sisters in Christ), who of late have seen him suffer in his members, and have ministered to their necessity, anointing them with the comfortable oil of your charitable assistance, even to the death. And now, since ye have seen Christ to live in the ashes of them whom the tyrants have slain, he willeth you to go away, upon just occasion offered you, and to declare to our dispersed brethren and sisters, that he is risen, and liveth in his elect members in England, and by death doth overcome infidelity, and that they shall see him in Galilee, which is by forsaking this world, and by a faithful desire to pass out of this world by those ways which he with his holy martyrs hath gone on before. God therefore, entire sisters, direct your way, as he did Abraham and Tobias unto a strange land. God give you health both of body and soul, that ye may go from virtue to virtue, and grow from strength to strength, until ye may see face to face the God of Sion in his holy hill, with the innumerable company of his blessed martyrs and saints. Let there be continual ascensions to heaven in your hearts."

The Marian exile receives illustration from a narrative written in her old age by Mrs. Throckmorton, the mother of William

¹ Philpot. P. 236. The title is Coverdale's.

Hickman, who in 1596 bought the manor of Gainsborough, and was resident there when the Separatist church was founded in 1602. She tells us that her father, a London mercer named Lock, had dared something for Protestantism in Henry VIII.'s time ; and that her mother " came to some light of the gospel, by means of some English books, sent privately to her by my father's factors, from beyond sea : whereupon she used to call me with my two sisters into her chamber, to read to us out of the same good books, very privately, for fear of trouble, because those good books were then accounted heretical." Her first husband, Anthony Hickman, was as zealous a Protestant as her father and mother, and was imprisoned under Mary for sheltering godly and well disposed Christians, and for sending them beyond sea, giving them money to supply their wants.

" Afterwards, my husband (to drive away the wicked days) went to Antwerp, where he had a fair house, which he rented for £70 a year ; and I being with child, went into Oxfordshire, to a gentleman's house that was a Lodge, and stood far off from any church or town (the name whereof was Chilswell), and there I was delivered : and from thence, I sent to Oxford, to the Bishops (who were then and there in prison, and did afterwards suffer martyrdom there), to be advised by them, whether I might suffer my child to be baptized after the popish manner ; who answered me, that the sacrament of baptism, as it was used by the papists, was the least corrupted, and therefore I might : but therewithal, they said that I might have gone out of England before that time, if I had done well. . . .

" Afterwards, I prepared to go to Antwerp, to my husband's house there, and, although my husband had two fair houses in England, the one in London, the other in Essex, at Romford, both of them well furnished with household stuff : yet I accounted all nothing, in comparison to liberty of conscience for the profession of Christ. . . . I might here tell, that my brother, Tho. Lock (who

was partner with my husband), would have gone with us, but that he could not get his wife's goodwill to go out of England. Whereupon, I would say to her, 'Sister, you stay here for covetousness and love of your husband's land and goods ; but I fear the Lord's hands will be upon you for it.' And, indeed, so it came to pass : for he being constrained, for fear of further trouble, to fashion himself outwardly to the popish religion, in some sort, was so grieved in mind thereat, that he died shortly after, with seven of his children."

She adds that they were safer in Antwerp than in England, not for any more liberty of the gospel given there, but because there were not parish churches, but only cathedral ; and it could not be so easily known who came to church, and who not. The governor of the English merchants in Antwerp winked at their absences from the English chapel ; and the old lady rejoices that when she returned to England, after Queen Mary's death, she had never been present at any of the popish masses, or any other of their idolatrous services.¹

The dilemma of the Protestants in Mary's reign was that of the Separatists in Elizabeth's—to stay at home and suffer in conscience, or to become exiles for the gospel. Robert Browne led out a company of fifty or sixty persons from Norwich, in 1581, to Middleburgh ; choosing to be under the Dutch rather than the Flemish confederation—just as the subsequent exiles went to Amsterdam and Leyden—because there they would have liberty of worship and a free press. Penry saw nothing but banishment before the London church ; and urged both the members and his wife to be prepared for it. To the church he writes—April 24th, 1593, while awaiting his trial—

"And my good brethren, seeing banishment with loss of goods is likely to betide you all, prepare yourselves for this hard

¹ Narrative printed in Stark's "*History and Antiquities of Gainsburgh*," (1817). Pp. 126-139.

entreaty, and rejoice that you are made worthy for Christ's cause, to suffer and bear all these things. And I beseech you, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, that none of you in this case look upon his particular estate, but regard the general state of the Church of God ; that the same may go and be kept together whithersoever it shall please God to send you. Oh ! the blessing will be great that shall ensue this care. Whereas, if you go, every man to provide for his own house, and to look for his own family—first neglecting poor Zion—the Lord will set his face against you, and scatter you from the one end of heaven to the other ; neither shall you find a resting place for the soles of your feet, or a blessing upon anything you take in hand ! . . .

“ Let not those of you that either have stocks in your hands, or some likely trades to live by, dispose of yourselves where it may be most commodious for your outward estate, and in the meantime suffer the poor ones, that have no such means, either to bear the whole work upon their weak shoulders, or to end their days in sorrow and mourning for want of outward and inward comforts in the land of strangers ; for the Lord will be an avenger of all such dealings. But consult with the whole church, yea, with the brethren of other places, how the church may be kept together, and built, whithersoever they go. Let not the poor and the friendless be forced to stay behind here, and to break a good conscience for want of your support and kindness unto them, that they may go with you.

“ And here, I humbly beseech you—not in any outward regard, as I shall answer before my God—that you would take my poor and desolate widow, and my mess of fatherless and friendless orphans, with you into exile, whithersoever you go ; and you shall find, I doubt not, that the blessed promises of my God, made unto me and mine, will accompany them, and even the whole church, for their sakes. For this, also, is the Lord's promise unto the holy seed ; as you shall not need much to

demand what they shall eat, or wherewithal they shall be clothed ; and, in short time, I doubt not but that they will be found helpful, and not burthensome to the church. Only, I beseech you, let them not continue after you in this land, where they must be enforced to go again into Egypt ; and my God will bless you, even with a joyful return unto your own country, for it. There are of you, who, I doubt not, will be careful of the performance of the will of your dead brother in this point, who may yet live to shew this kindness unto yours—I will say no more.”¹

Penry’s advice was immediately acted upon ; before the summer of 1593 was over, the first detachment of emigrants, consisting mainly of the humbler members of the church who were discharged from prison for that purpose, betook themselves to Holland. They settled first at Campen, and then at Naarden, two little towns on the Zuyder Zee ; they were so needy that, in the latter place, a small sum of money was sent by the magistrates to their deacons for distribution among them. In the end of 1595 they had taken up their abode at Amsterdam ; their Pastor, Francis Johnson, being left behind in prison. They were still miserably poor ; dependent on Barrowe’s legacy, on contributions sent from London, Middleburgh, and from a church of English merchants in Barbary ; Dr. Dexter thinks that they may have received help from the city of Amsterdam.² If we would understand their poverty, we must not only remember that they were mostly artizans, who had been obliged to part with their small stocks and properties in forced sales ; we must bear in mind the relative positions of England and Holland in the commercial civilisation of the time. In the industrial arts and in the conduct of business, Amsterdam was far in advance of London ; they did not go to Holland to represent prosperous English houses, nor as

¹ Waddington. “ Penry, the Pilgrim Martyr.” Pp. 173-5.

² Dexter. P. 269.

skilled workmen ; they went, as now men come to England from Eastern Germany and Poland, to do inferior work for any wages which might be offered them. "They were almost consumed with deep poverty ; loaded with reproaches ; despised and afflicted by all." The civil authorities did not trouble them, but the Dutch clergy, acting partly from their own suspicions, and partly influenced by letters sent from England, regarded them with a jealous eye. They appear to have been screened from persecution chiefly by their own insignificance.¹

For these last touches of description we are indebted to the "Life of Henry Ainsworth," who in their misery identified himself with them. Ainsworth was a remarkable man, whom every historian and biographer of the movement dwells on with special interest. He cannot be identified with any University, but he was a man of large and accurate learning. He was especially eminent as a Hebrew scholar, and commentator on the Old Testament. In this department he enjoyed a European reputation ; edition after edition of "*Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique*" refers to him and draws a distinction between "Henry Ainsworth, the able commentator on the scriptures, and Henry Ainsworth, the heresiarch, who was one of the chief of the Brownists, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth." "Nevertheless," says the "*Biographia Britannica*," "nothing is more certain than that these two were the same man." His great work "*Annotations on the Five Books of Moses, the Psalms, and the Song of Solomon*" won for him an encomium from the Orientalists of the University of Leyden ; "they thought he had not his better for the Hebrew tongue in the University, nor scarce in Europe." The book has been repeatedly republished, the last time in Edinburgh, 1843. Dr. Doddridge says "his translation is, in many places, to be preferred to our own, especially on the Psalms." Matthew Poole and Adam Clarke speak of his knowledge, his judgment and his

¹ Brook. Vol. ii. pp. 299-300.

accuracy. Dr. Dexter "was assured in London, in 1873, by one of the company of Old Testament Revisers, that Ainsworth's commentary is by them held to be a valuable help in their work." Tradition has been busy with his memory; he is said to have lived in Amsterdam, on "ninepence a week, and some boiled roots"; to have carried a porter's knot for a bookseller, who first discovered his skill in Hebrew and made it known. A romantic but unverified story attributes his death to the jealousy of some Jewish Rabbis, with whom he wished to discuss the Messiahship of Jesus. His contributions to the literature of Separatism are as distinguished as his Hebrew scholarship; and his personal character was equally excellent. He was fair-minded and moderate of speech, in an age when it was difficult to be either; meek and amiable, while of a fervid zeal. "He lived and died," says one who knew him well without sharing his opinions, "unblamable to the world; and I am thoroughly persuaded that his soul rests with his Saviour." Such was the man whom, in the absence of the Pastor and Elders, the church chose to be its teacher.

Francis Johnson came to Amsterdam in the end of 1597, and at once resumed his pastorate. He had spent the summer in an expedition to Newfoundland, where he and his brother intended to settle. The narrative of their journey is so curious, it reveals a state of feeling so different from any which would be possible among ourselves, and it illustrates so forcibly the loyalty to the Queen and commonwealth which the Separatists always strongly asserted, that a few lines may be given to it.

A petition was presented to the Council from "the people falsely called Brownists," which—after referring to the banishment, imprisonment and other great troubles sustained only for some matters of conscience by her Majesty's natural born subjects true and loyal, whereby they cannot perform the duty of subjects as they desire—makes the following request. "Whereas

means are now offered for our being in a foreign and far country, which lieth to the west from hence in the province of Canada ; where by the providence of the Almighty and her Majesty's favour, we may not only worship God, as we are in conscience persuaded by his word ; but also do unto her Majesty and our country great good service, and in time also greatly annoy that bloody and persecuting Spaniard about the Bay of Mexico. Our humble suit is ; that it may please your honours to be a means unto her excellent Majesty, that with her Majesty's most gracious favour and protection we may presently depart thither, and there remaining to be accounted her Majesty's faithful and loving subjects ; to whom we owe all duty and obedience in the Lord : promising hereby, and taking God to record who searcheth the hearts of all people, that wheresoever we become we will, by the grace of God, live and die faithful to her Highness and this land of our nativity."

Two ships, the *Hopewell* and the *Chancewell*, were, at this time, being fitted out for an Island called Rainea, or Ramea, in the gulf of St. Lawrence, " the one being appointed to winter and the other to return hither." An order of the Privy Council states that the merchants undertaking this " voyage of fishing and discovery," " have made humble suit unto her Majesty to transport out of this realm divers artificers and other persons that are noted to be sectaries, whose minds are continually in an ecclesiastical ferment, whereof four shall at this present sail thither in those ships that go this present voyage." Permission is given to take them, but the merchants are to give bond that the sectaries shall not return to England " unless they shall be content to reform themselves, and to live in obedience to her laws ecclesiastical for matters of religion ; and that they nor any of them shall serve her Majesty's enemies, and before they depart they are to take allegiance to her Majesty as becometh dutiful subjects." Francis Johnson and Daniel Studley went in the *Hopewell* ; George

Johnson and John Clarke in the *Chancewell*; leaving Gravesend, April 8th.

The reason of their return appears in the narrative of Mr. Charles Leigh, a London merchant, who went as chief commander of the voyage in the *Hopewell*; he, however, makes no reference to his Separatist passengers. The *Chancewell*, of the burthen of seventy tons, was wrecked off Cape Breton, and her crew had ultimately to be taken on board the *Hopewell*, of 120 tons burthen. After various fishing and privateering adventures, in which French ships were treated as friends, and Spanish ships as enemies, on July 25th they captured a ship of Belle Isle. They found their prize to be "of great defence, and a notable strong ship, almost two hundred tons in burthen, very well appointed, and in all things fitted for a man-of-warre." The crew of the *Hopewell* was again divided, Leigh and his friends being resolved to take their passage in the prize; and on the 2nd of August, they put off for a harbour in the North of Newfoundland, where they expected another prize. "But when we came to sea we found our sailes so olde, our ropes so rotten, and our provision of bread and drinke so short, as that we were constrained to make our resolution directly for England"; and those in the *Hopewell*, being "generally offended, thinking and saying that we in the prize went about to cousin and deceive them, sent us word that they would keepe us company for England." The prize ship reached the Isle of Wight on September 5th, the captain and crew proceeding after a few days to London. As Johnson and his companions were under engagement not to return to England, they were forced to hide themselves until, about the middle of September, they found their way to Amsterdam.¹

From the time of the Johnsons' arrival in Amsterdam the history

¹ Waddington. Pp. 113-16. Dexter. Pp. 277-8. "Ikakluyt's Voyages" (Edin. 1889). Vol. xiii. pp. 62-74. Dexter and Waddington represent the *Hope-well* as being badly fitted; but Leigh says it was the Belle Isle prize which was so.

of the church is a troubled one. A pitiful quarrel had broken out in London between the two brothers about the marriage of Francis and the dressing of his wife. They were reconciled before leaving for Newfoundland, and during the voyage, for a considerable portion of which they were in different ships, they were on affectionate terms ; but they were no sooner back in Europe than the old jealousy reappeared. In Amsterdam it was aggravated by the not unnatural incident that Mrs. Francis Johnson did not wish George Johnson to live with her and her husband. All the miserable details were made matters of conscience, and brought before the church for discipline. Francis was imperious, George querulous ; in the end the pastor excommunicated his brother and his father, and the church was rent over the quarrel. By and by, there came to Amsterdam a Separatist community from Gainsborough, under the leadership of John Smyth. He introduced new points of doctrine ; he became Arminian and Baptist. He had many excellent qualities, and the questions on which he was disputatious were well worthy of investigation. But the temper was bad on both sides ; and a complete disruption ensued, in the issue of which the once noble church disappears from history. Ainsworth adhered to Johnson as long as he could, but at last left him. Johnson and his followers, having drawn odium on themselves from the magistrates and citizens, as well as from their fellow believers, removed, soon after 1612, to Emden, in East Friesland ; from which place the unhappy man returned to Amsterdam to die, in January, 1618.

The history of the Gainsborough church is enveloped in obscurity. It was gathered by John Smyth, who was a resident of the town, and was constituted a church under his leadership in 1602. From the Gainsborough church proceeded the church at Scrooby, formed in 1606, which went to Leyden in 1609 ; and from which again, in 1620, went out the *May-*

flower company, who founded the colony of New Plymouth, and were the authors of American Congregationalism. We have contemporary authority for these statements in the journal of Bradford, the second governor of the colony, who was himself a member of the Scrooby church.

He tells us "That several religious people, near the joining borders of Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire, finding their pious Ministers vexed with Subscription or silenced; and the people greatly vexed with the Commissary Courts, Apparitors, and Pursuivants: which they bare, sundry years, with much patience, till they were occasioned, by the continuance and increase of these troubles and other means, to see further into these things, by the light of the Word of God—How that not only the ceremonies were unlawful; but also the worldly and tyrannous power of the Prelates: who would, contrary to the freedom of the gospel, load the consciences of men; and, by their compulsive power, make a profane mixture of things and persons in Divine Worship. That their Offices, Courts, and Canons were unlawful: being such as have no warrant in the Word of God; but the same that were used in Popery, and still retained.

"Upon which, this People shake off this yoke of Antichristian bondage; and as the Lord's free People, join themselves by Covenant into a Church state; to walk in all His ways, made known or to be made known to them, according to their best endeavours: whatever it cost them."

It is the movement of which Gainsborough was the centre which is here described; the division of the church, and the origin of the Scrooby church is narrated thus—"The Purely Reformed Church in the north of England, by reason of the distance of their habitations, are obliged to assemble in two several places, and become two distinct Churches. In one, besides several of note, is Master John Smith, a man of able gifts, and a good Preacher; who is chosen their Pastor. But these, afterwards,

going over into the Low Countries, and falling into errors, there, for the most part, bury themselves and their names :

"But the other church, besides several worthy men, as Master Richard Clifton, a grave and reverend Preacher ; and the famous Master John Robinson, who is afterwards their Pastor for many years, till God takes him away by death ; as also Master William Brewster, a reverend man, who afterwards is chosen elder, and lives with them till old age."¹

Robinson was a graduate of Cambridge, and a fellow of his college—Corpus Christi. He was loyal to Puritanism, both in the University and as a minister in and about Norwich ; he suffered persecution for his fidelity, and mental distress because of the opposition which the preaching of the gospel met with. Ainsworth, in his "Counterpoison," says that "certain citizens [in Norwich] were excommunicated for resorting unto and praying with Mr. Robinson, a man worthily revered of all the city for the grace of God in him." He himself records the struggle it was to him to break with the Puritan ministry, whose piety and learning he admired. For a long time he had some taste of the truth, but was kept back by the "over-valuation which," says he, "I made of the learning and holiness of these and the like persons, blushing in myself to have a thought of pressing one hair-breadth before them in this thing, behind whom I knew myself to come so many miles in all other things. . . . Had not the truth been in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, I had never broken these bonds of flesh and blood, wherein I was so straitly tied, but had suffered the light of God to have been put out in mine own unthankful heart by other men's darkness."² His

¹ "Prince's Annals." Reprinted in Mr. Arber's "English Garner." Vol. ii. pp. 348, 9, 360. The date, 1602, of the formation of the Gainsborough church, is given on the contemporary authority of Morton. The date 1620, of the *May-flower*, is unquestioned. The other dates are copied from Prince.

² Robinson. Vol. ii. pp. 51, 52.

ability, candour, and graciousness in controversy were recognised both in his University and in Leyden, where he was chosen, and urged contrary to his own wish, to defend the Calvinistic theology against Episcopius, the recently appointed Professor of Theology. English Episcopalians and Scotch Presbyterians, who have few good words to speak of Independents, commend his piety and wisdom. In Leyden he was beloved by the University and the City ; and the Dutch, in veneration of his name, to this day call the Independents Robinsonians. Henry Jacob is styled by his son "the first Independant in England" ; but Robinson is called the Father of Independency without qualification. No grudge appears in the honour paid him by public men ; his congregation looked up to him with tender affection. He was as modest as he was great. His birthplace is uncertain ; no details of his early life are known ; there is not a portrait of him, nor any record of his personal appearance ; it would have pained him to think that his followers might be called by his name ; the excessive influence of leaders, which so often hinders reformation, was to him "a misery much to be lamented."

Brewster was a worthy coadjutor of Robinson. He, too, was a Cambridge man ; he served for a short time Secretary Davison in confidential work for Queen Elizabeth. When Davison was sacrificed, to avert from Elizabeth the odium which followed the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, Brewster left the Court, and retired to Scrooby, a village in Nottinghamshire, on the great North road, where he resided in the Manor House, and had charge of the service of the posts ; an important office connected with the general travel and traffic of the district, and not simply with the delivery of letters. Brewster ultimately became the spiritual leader of the Plymouth colony, which Robinson died before he could join ; enjoying their ungrudged confidence and their love.

With these two men was joined Richard Clifton, who, before he separated from the Church of England, was rector of Babworth ;

"a grave and reverend preacher, who by his fervour and diligence had done much good, and under God had been the means of the conversion of many." "Mr. Richard Clifton was a good and fatherly old man when he came first into Holland, having a great white beard ; and pity it was such a reverend old man should be forced to leave his country, and at those years to go into exile. But it was his lot, and he bore it patiently. Much good had he done in the country where he lived, and converted many to God by his faithful and painful ministry, both in preaching and catechising. Sound and orthodox he always was, and so continued to his end. He belonged to the church at Leyden ; but being settled at Amsterdam and then aged, he was loath to remove any more ; and so, when they removed he was dismissed to them there,¹ and there remained until he died." He died, May 20, 1616, and was buried in the South Church ; his age was 63.²

Queen Elizabeth died in 1603 ; with the accession of James to the throne, the hopes of the Puritans, for a short time, revived. They welcomed him with a petition in which they asked for a further reformation of the church ; but his behaviour at the Hampton Court Conference made it evident that his good faith was not to be relied on, and that there was no more prospect of religious reformation under the Stuarts than there had been under the Tudors. He added personal insolence to injustice, taunting them that their position was not so logical as that of the Separatists. This was a not uncommon argument ; Whitgift had used it before. "Why do you desire," it was put to them, "to execute a public ministry under us ? Why do you not wholly, with the Brownists, separate and get you to Amsterdam, to your holy brethren there ?" The answer was, "the churches willing to have their ministry, however in their constitution defective, are

¹ *I.e.*, to the church in Amsterdam.

² Hunter. "Founders of New Plymouth." Pp. 40, 41, 44. Quoted mostly from "Young's Chronicles."

true" ; therefore so long as their consciences are in the meantime unconvinced of error, their obligations to their people, and to the service which God has called them to, do not cease. They add, however, an intimation that they may find themselves driven to a separation.¹ That such taunts, and still more the logic of the position, produced their impression, the increase of Independency, which was revealed in the next reign, made evident.

There was no toleration of Separatism in the Court. In the fall of 1607, says Bradford, "Master Robinson's Church in the north of England, being extremely harrassed ; some cast into prison, some beset in their houses, some forced to leave their farms and families ; they begin to fly over to Holland, with their reverend Pastor, Master Clifton, for Purity of Worship and Liberty of Conscience." Great difficulties were in their way. The "catchpoles" who harassed them in England tried to hinder their leaving England ; the ports and havens were shut against them. One company was betrayed by the shipmaster whom they had hired to convey them and their property ; they were apprehended, rifled of books and money and much other goods, and some imprisoned for trial. In a second attempt, when the men were got aboard, the master espied a great company, both horse and foot, with bills, and guns, and other weapons, and put out at once to sea ; the wives and children were left behind destitute, with no change of clothing, to be brought before one justice after another, who could not for shame imprison so many women and children for no other cause than that they must go with their husbands : the ship was caught in a storm, and nearly wrecked off the coast of Norway, before it reached Amsterdam. Such were the stories told, in after years, to the younger generation in New England. In the end, however, the Scrooby church found itself in Holland ; Master Robinson and Master Brewster being of the last, having tarried to help the weakest over before them.

¹ Waddington. Pp. 153, 154.

Master Robinson's church, continues Bradford,¹ stayed at Amsterdam about a year ; but seeing that Smyth and his company were fallen into contention with the church that was there before them, and foreseeing that the flames were like to break out in the Ancient Church itself (as afterwards lamentably came to pass) ; they think it best to remove in time, before they were any way engaged with the same. Though they knew it would be very much to the prejudice of their outward interest, as it proved to be ; yet valuing peace and spiritual comfort above other riches, they remove to Leyden. At first the citizens of Leyden looked on them suspiciously ; but their industry and peaceable conduct secured them the goodwill of all. Their church life was as harmonious as that of their Amsterdam brethren was troubled. "If ever," says Robinson, "I saw the beauty of Zion, and the glory of the Lord filling his tabernacle, it hath been in the manifestation of the divers graces of God in the church, in that heavenly harmony and comely order, wherein by the grace of God we are set and walk.² Beside Robinson their pastor, and Brewster, "a man well approved and of great integrity," their ruling elder, they had three able men for deacons. "And that which was a crown to them, they lived together in love and peace all their days, without any considerable differences or any disturbance, that grew thereby, but such as was easily healed in love ; and so they continued until, with mutual consent, they removed into New England."³

The reasons of their leaving Leyden are specified by Bradford. The difficulties in Holland discouraged many from coming to them out of England ; and obliged many to return. Their children succumbed to the temptations of a strange land, becoming soldiers and sailors under the Dutch government, some

¹ Arber. "English Garner." Vol. ii. p. 365.

² Waddington. P. 194.

³ Robinson. Vol. iii. p. 486.

taking to courses tending to dissoluteness and the danger of their souls ; to the great grief of their parents, and fear lest their posterity should degenerate, and religion die among them. They had an inward zeal, and great hope of laying some foundation, or making way for propagating the Kingdom of Christ to the remote ends of the earth ; though they should be but as stepping-stones to others.¹ It is not hard to see their one inspiring motive. They were Englishmen and patriots, as well as Christians ; they believed that their church doctrine would be influential in building up a pure national life. They were urged to betake themselves to some Dutch colony ; but they chose to go under the English government, where they might enjoy their religious privileges without molestation. They recognised that their hard experience had been a valuable discipline for life in a new land ; they knew that they had learned much in Holland fitting them to be pioneers ; and believed that they had a divine mission to lay the foundation of a nobler English life. To suppose that they had any vision of the great Republic, in whose origin they were to play a conspicuous part, would be to misconceive the position ; but they had a patriotic purpose, a purpose which broadened as time revealed its potency. They sought a little England in the western world, and New England calls them its fathers and founders.

By this time they had secured the confidence of the authorities in Leyden, who bore witness that none of them ever troubled the courts of justice, and the good will of the citizens in general. 'The knowledge that they were exiles for conscience' sake gave them a special interest in the eyes of the men of Holland. When the departing company took ship at Delft Haven for their adventurous voyage, it was amid the tears and good wishes of their Dutch as well as their English friends. The remembrance of their stay in Leyden is to this day recalled, with equal pleasure,

¹ Arber. "English Garner." Vol. ii. pp. 382-3.



LEAVING DELFT HAVEN.

in Holland and in America, and is one of the interests the Dutch and American peoples have in common. From Holland they carried many useful lessons to their new home ; they were wiser politicians, as well as more practised emigrants, when they left Leyden than they had been when they arrived there from Scrooby twelve years before.

With the exile in Holland ends the Story of the English Separatists, under that appellation. The historic title Independents, which displaced the older name, dates back to Robinson and Jacob ; and the change is ■ real, not a merely verbal, one. The substance of the testimony remained the same, but the incidence of the controversy was altered. Purity of church fellowship was as earnestly contended for as ever ; but under its positive form as a church doctrine, not negatively as a protest. It is of the function and prerogative of the particular church that Robinson and Jacob write ; its independence of all government, civil and ecclesiastical, except the direct rule of Christ. "This we hold and affirm," says Robinson, "that a company consisting but of two or three gathered by a covenant to walk in all the ways of God, is a church, and so hath the whole power of Christ. Two or three, thus gathered together, have the same right with two or three thousand ; neither the smallness of their numbers, nor the meanness of their persons, can prejudice their rights." He granted the usefulness of councils of neighbouring churches, and the expediency of grave assemblies, for reconciling differences, by giving friendly advice ; but not for exercising any act of authority whatever, without the free consent of the churches themselves.¹ Jacob defines a true church to be "a number of aithful people, formed by their willing consent in a spiritual outward society, or body politic, ordinarily coming together in one place ; instituted by Christ in his New Testament, and having

¹ Brook. Vol. ii. p. 338.

power to exercise ecclesiastical government, and all God's other spiritual ordinances—the means of salvation—in and for itself, immediately from Jesus Christ." Jacob strongly insisted that a church must be a permanent society, not a casual association of believers; and both Robinson and Jacob dwelt on the necessity that a church should not be so large as that the members should be unable to know each other. "This popular government," continues Jacob, "neither is, nor ever hath been, nor can be, in the least sort dangerous to any civil state whatsoever."^x

Another name was given to Robinson and Jacob; they were called "semi-separatists," because, while they continued to affirm that it was impossible for them to have church communion with the mixed parish assemblies, they held it to be right, it might even be a duty, occasionally to join them in prayer and listening to the preaching of the Word. In other ways, it was evident that what Dr. Dexter calls "the narrowness and bitterness of separatism" was disappearing. Their charity leads them to draw fine distinctions. They go beyond the earlier Separatists in the recognition of "tender and gracious souls" in the parish assemblies; they say that because these congregations have in them godly and holy Christians, associated together to serve God, so far as they see, agreeable to His Holy Word, so far are they accidentally true churches. Proper diocesan and provincial churches, however, are not in the New Testament, and therefore their conformity to Christ's authority can only be accidental. So that their own duty to form free congregations, independent of diocesan and provincial government, remains. Robinson's parting counsels to the emigrants from Leyden contain these words—"That we should use all means to avoid and shake off the name of Brownists, being a mere nickname, and brand to make religion odious,

^x Waddington. "Congregational Church History." Bicentenary Prize Essays, 1862, p. 55. Quoted from Jacob's "Divine Beginning, &c.," pp. 2, 5.

and the professors of it, to the end of the world. And to that end, said he, I should be glad if some godly minister would go over with you before my coming : for, said he, there will be no difference between the unconformable ministers¹ and you, when they come to the practice of the ordinances out of the kingdom, and so advised us by all means to endeavour to close with the godly part of the kingdom of England, and rather to study unity than division, viz., how near we might possibly without sin close with them, than in the least measure to affect division or separation from them. And be not loath to take another pastor or teacher, saith he ; for that flock that hath two shepherds is not endangered but secured by it.”²

Personal character may have had something to do with this change. Both Robinson and Jacob had separated themselves with great reluctance from their Puritan brethren, and only after long delay. But it was not only in them that the tendency appeared. An anonymous treatise published in Holland, in 1611, reveals the same spirit. It is in the form of a dialogue between Desiderius (apparently a Frenchman, of Evangelical sympathies, resident in England) and Miles Micklebound (a Separatist). The writer identifies himself with Barrowe, and shews no abatement of earnestness in the demand for purity of fellowship. But he displays a beautiful longing for peace and catholicity. The fact was, the conditions of life were changed. The men were no longer under the necessity of continually protesting. All the influences about them were those of liberty, and therefore favourable to peace of mind. As pastors of faithful congregations, they had simply to formulate the system of church government they administered. The constructive impulse is itself eirenical ; and the habit of looking for

¹ *I.e.*, the Puritans. The term Nonconformist was originally applied to nonconforming members of the Church of England ; not to those who had separated from it.

² Waddington. “Congregational History.” Pp. 214, 215.

tokens of Christian character in their church members disposes Congregationalists to recognise the reality of Christian life outside their own communion. There was much contention in store for the Independents in England, and hard struggle for the Independents in America. The exile in Holland was a quiet breathing-place, in which they learned a lesson they have never forgotten ; that faithfulness to conviction and large charity are the "strength and beauty" of the churches.





CHAPTER V.

SEPARATISM AND THE NATIONAL LIFE.



F it were possible to recall from the limbo of unrecorded transactions some of the conferences the Separatists held with one another ; or if, among those who, through identity of conviction, understand the position taken by these men, there was one who possessed the historic and literary insight which enabled Walter Savage Landor to write his "Imaginary Conversations" ; there are no incidents on which light would be more welcome than the intercourse between John Robinson and Henry Jacob, in Leyden, in 1610. Each of the men is interesting. Robinson, though so young—he was barely fifty when, fifteen years after, he was buried in St. Peter's Church—was a "reverend pastor" : wise men accepted his leadership ; ministers sought him out for conference ; the church in London and the colony of New Plymouth asked his counsel ; to this day light and inspiration are in his words. Jacob was the most modern man of them all. He frankly confesses that the church of Christ is "a certaine Democratie" : a constitutional democracy with aristocratical and monarchical elements.¹ His English is easily read ; if it wants

¹ "The Divine Beginning and Institution of Christ's True Visible or Ministeriall Church." Leyden, 1610. Sheet A, 3.

the quaintness of the Pilgrim chroniclers and the exquisite use of Scripture imagery which lent a picturesqueness to Robinson's style, like that which charmed the House of Commons when listening to John Bright; it has a self-repression which was rare in the controversialists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; his arguments are more baldly logical than suit our taste to day, but he is not diffuse. Both men had undertaken the task of working out a church system on Congregational lines; Robinson's "Justification of Separation," and Jacob's "Divine Beginning and Institution," were published that same year. But other anxieties than those of literary production must have been burdening them; they were pastors of small seclusive congregations, having to solve practical difficulties as they arose. The troubles of the Amsterdam church supplied them with a painful illustration of the decline of spiritual force where earnest men thought only of little personal questions, or discussed even grave doctrinal questions with too much personal impetuosity. Francis Johnson, who had guided Jacob into Congregationalism, had seen two disruptions in the church under his pastorate; one about his wife's clothes, another even now in progress about the eldership. John Smyth had been Robinson's leader, and he was worthy of Robinson's affection; at present Smyth was trying to solve doctrinal questions by Baxter's method of continual argument, rather than according to St. Paul's maxim of receiving the weak in faith, but not to discussions of doubtful matters. Plainly, all the problems of the Christian life were not solved by separation from the Church of England. Why were these brethren who had suffered together, and sustained each other in suffering, now ready to bite and devour one another, and being consumed one of another? What was lacking to the spiritual sanity of the Separatists in Amsterdam? Was there anything in the circumstances of the churches in Holland which provided a special opportunity for

these outbreaks of the worldly temper in Christ's confessors? Did the thought occur to Robinson and Jacob that their life in exile was not furnishing all the conditions necessary to a manly piety? that even liberty of worship would be too dearly purchased if the price paid for it was seclusion from the social and political interests which, giving rise to mighty antagonisms, tend at the same time to keep down ignoble personal strifes? Out of these fancies emerges one historic fact—Robinson and Jacob came ultimately to the conclusion that Holland, with all its attractions, was no permanent home for Englishmen. Jacob returned, in 1616, to gather together the remnant of the London Separatists and organise the Independent church in Southwark. Robinson, in 1620, sent out the pioneers of Congregationalism to America, watched over their interests, and would have joined them, with the last detachment from Leydon, but for his death in 1625.

The experience of the Amsterdam church illustrates a real danger to which seclusive societies are continually exposed—that of becoming self-centred; small communities may too easily be small-minded. Men of unresting activity, in intellect and conscience, need a large sphere in which to exercise themselves; public ends dignify their activity, keep it from wearing down personal character and social peace. If Separatism had meant merely, as its opponents in the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries have affirmed, a desire to run away from the evils of the time, and to escape national responsibilities; Separatism would have perished, as the Amsterdam church perished, and it would have deserved its fate. The Separatists were public-spirited, patriotic men; their position was that of active protest against religious and national wrong-doing, not simply that of withdrawal from it. The free, independent church of consecrated souls was the place of refuge, where they renewed the spiritual force required for strenuous public life; and learned from Christ how his disciples

should live in the world. "Political dissenters" are the only seceders who can permanently influence for good the national life; or even permanently maintain a high standard of social godliness. The history of the three centuries, following the period we have been studying, illustrates this. The founding of New England was a task arduous enough to sustain the temper which had been called out in the reign of Elizabeth; and American Congregationalism has grown both strong and honourable in the effort to stamp the New England character on the national life. In the struggles of the Revolution, beginning with rebellion against Charles I. and ending with 1688, English Independency produced not only Ironsides, but saints and scholars. The eighteenth century, with its limited franchise and various restrictive Acts which kept dissenters out of public life, witnessed the "decay of the dissenting interest," not more in social consideration than in breadth of tone. The nineteenth century, which has called them back into political importance, has seen a revival in social and philanthropic action, and the courage which faces practical problems; this has reacted on the religious character, making the churches more tranquil, personal piety deeper, and theological thought wider and more direct. The Foreign Missionary enterprise, which belongs to the same century, does not stand apart from this awakening to public interests; it is itself a public movement of the most generous kind, and in its large relations it would be impossible in a nation not politically free.

It is curious, as well as instructive, to notice how much more these men had in common with the nineteenth than with the sixteenth century; how they anticipated many of the political and social changes on which we are priding ourselves to day. While the Episcopalians, clerical and lay, were affirming that to touch the revenues of the Bishops and rich benefices would lead

to the decay of learning, by discouraging young men from entering the Universities, the Separatists were thinking of a national system of education. They advocated both general free schools, and the movement we know as University extension in its two forms—the provision of colleges in populous centres, and of lectureships where colleges cannot be sustained. Barrowe, answering the charge given out by Mr. Giffard, Mr. Some, and others, that the Separatists condemned lawful arts and necessary sciences, holy exercises and schools of institution, and so were labouring to bring in barbarism, says—"We desire with our whole hearts that the tongues, and other godly arts, were taught not in the universities, or a few places only; but in all places where an established [that is, a constituted or settled] church is; at the least, in every city of the land." The "religious difficulty," too, he would have solved, according to the Birmingham method, of special religious instruction under the care of the churches. "Yet this, indeed, we hold, That every christian man ought to have his abiding and dwelling, and to bring up his children, in some place where a christian congregation is; and that all schools of learning ought to be kept in such places where both teachers and scholars may be under the holy government and censures of Christ in his church; and may live, and be kept, in holy order."¹ And Penry would have had "in all shires a Lecture of all Sciences, that such as cannot put their sons to Cambridge or Oxford, may have them in the free schools, and after by those Lectures brought through all arts; which would greatly increase learned and wise men in this land, and make a flourishing time."²

To these purposes they would have had the revenues of the suppressed Romish foundations applied. Francis Johnson goes a

¹ Barrowe's "Plaine Refutation" (1591). P. 124. Quoted by Hanbury; vol. i. pp. 56, 57.

² Penry's "Humble Motion." (1590.) P. 8 of the 1641 reprint.

great deal farther. "The Queen may take to her own civil uses the Lordships and possessions of the prelates and other clergy, which happy work, by what princes soever it is done, as certainly it will come to pass, for the Lord of hosts has spoken of it, it will greatly redound to the glory of God, the honour of themselves, the free passage of the gospel, the peace of the church, and the benefit of the whole commonwealth." He proposes that these endowments should be given "for schools, universities, the upholding of hospitals, almshouses, and the like ; for the help of poor widows, and fatherless, and strangers, for the impotent sick and helpless of all sorts ; for making and repairing of bridges and highways." Penry, in the pamphlet just quoted, would have only the surplus revenues devoted to education ; the first charge on the reclaimed rich benefices and pluralities should be, in his judgment in 1590, a provision for preachers all over the land. This was the common Puritan contention, against which Francis Johnson affirms that of the Separatists. "The Brownists would have these idolatrous livings returned to the Commonwealth from which they were taken. But our forward ministers that wish the prelates down and their livings taken from them, would gladly have them to their own use."¹

Lord Bacon—who, like Sir Walter Raleigh, treats the Brownists somewhat contemptuously, but not unfairly—has a criticism on Browne's second treatise in his Middleburgh pamphlet. He says "they had not been much known at all, had not Brown their leader written a pamphlet, wherein, as it came into his head, he inveighed more against logick and rhetorick, than against the state of the church (which writing was much read)"; and had it not been for Barrowe's conversion.² It is strange that Bacon, who

¹ Waddington. "Congregational History, 1567-1700." P. 108. The "forward ministers" are the Puritans; the word is used constantly, not in an offensive sense, but as synonymous with what we should now call "advanced."

² "Observations on a Libel." Bacon's Works (1740). V v. p. 353.

wrought to deliver science from the pedantries which were hindering its advancement, should not have recognised Browne's purpose to deliver public teaching from the same. It was against the habit of constant Latin, and occasional Greek and Hebrew, quotations in the pulpit, which makes the Puritan and Anglican sermons of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries wearisome reading, that Browne inveighed ; and against the constant use of syllogistic terms in argument, such as still gives a grotesque character to the proceedings of Presbyterian courts. The literary judgment of to day would be in favour of Browne.

Fifty years ago, no phrase had more power to fire the enthusiasm of those who constituted the Free Church of Scotland than "the crown rights of the Redeemer" ; recent legislation about church patronage in Scotland, and the wish of the established clergy and people that they could effect a union between their church and the non-established Presbyterians, are a confession that the Free Church agitation was justifiable. That great idea, that Christ has crown rights in his church, is anticipated in Henry Jacob's "Divine Beginning and Institution of Christ's true visible or Ministeriall Church" ; in which, again and again, he advances the argument that all which Christ as Prophet teaches, Christ as King commands ; and that, therefore, the order of the church described in the New Testament must be accepted as prescribed by Christ. The same idea appears when the Separatists were asked if the church had authority to excommunicate the prince. It was a subtle question ; for the answer might easily be made to wear an appearance of treason ; but the men on trial did not shirk it. The prince, as a member of a church, they said, is only one private person among the others ; if she—for they were bold enough to say "she" when the ruling prince was a Queen, and did not shelter themselves under an impersonal "he"—have done nothing worthy of excommunication, the church will say so ; if she have, the church is bound to proceed to discipline. It was

the same spirit which moved Andrew Melville to tell James that, King of Scotland though he was, in the church he was but Christ's "sillie vassal." We have already seen that when Penry was asked whether the prince had obligations to her subjects, he replied as the seventeenth century decided the question; and as all constitutionalists answer it to-day. Just in so far as these interrogations prejudiced the case of the men on trial, the nineteenth century will hold them to have been crafty, tyrannical, and unrighteous.

On another point, the Separatists were more in accordance with modern sentiment than were either Nonconformists or Evangelical churchmen in the beginning of this century; they were free from the extravagant individualism against which we are now witnessing a somewhat excessive revolt. Extreme religious individualism was an outgrowth of the Methodist Revival, among other influences; it marked a time of almost universal indifference to church doctrine; it was not the old theory of Independency. One of its most striking illustrations is in the verse of a hymn, written by the Rev. John Newton, a Church of England clergyman, and very often sung in dissenting chapels.

" 'Tis his love his people raises
Over self to reign as kings;
And as priests, his solemn praises
Each for a thank-off'ring brings."

Here is a conception of the Christian life which aroused the indignation of Frederick Maurice; the kingship of believers is limited to mere self-government, their priesthood identified with the right of every man to say his own prayers. It was not a distinctively dissenting conception; we find it in Archbishop Whateley as well as in Robert Robinson, of Cambridge. It was not the idea of the Separatists. They contended for pure and disciplined churches, in order that the social obligation involved

in both the kingship and the priesthood might be fulfilled. An extract from the Catechism which forms the most important, the teaching, part of Browne's "book which sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians," will make this plain.

"Q. 55. How hath the church the use of those graces, which all the brethren and people have to do good withal?

A. Because every one of the church is made a king, a priest, and a prophet under Christ, to uphold and further the kingdom of God, and to break and destroy the kingdom of Antichrist and Satan.

Q. 56. How are we made kings?

A. We must all watch one another, and try out all wickedness. We must privately and openly rebuke the private and open offenders. We must also separate the wilful and more grievous offenders, and withdraw ourselves from them, and gather the righteous together.

Q. 57. How are all Christians made priests under Christ?

A. They present and offer up prayers unto God, for themselves and for others. They turn others from iniquity, so that atonement is made in Christ unto justification.

In them also and for them others are sanctified, by partaking the graces of Christ unto them."¹

On the two main points, the political and the religious, the judgment of the succeeding centuries has been given for the Separatists, and against those who condemned them. The rejection of the Comprehension Bill in 1689 was a declaration that the Puritan idea of a national church was impracticable; the passing of the Toleration Act, giving the liberty of free combination for religious purposes, was a declaration that Anglican exclusiveness was equally so. And all the progress since made, from toleration to religious liberty and on toward giving all churches an equal legal

¹ "A Booke which sheweth, &c." Sheet D, pp. 2 and 4. British Museum copy.

and political standing, is a declaration that the peace and welfare of the nation have been advanced, not overthrown, by accepting their counsels. Their doctrine of purity of fellowship, that only Christian believers and persons of at least outwardly Christian conduct, should be in the Christian fellowship, is the generally accepted habit of all churches. Whitgift's five objections, already cited,¹ to allow congregations to elect their own ministers, would shock the conscience of the community, were they now seriously advanced ; there probably is not, in either House of Legislature, an Erastian so daring as to affirm that a society, of which such things could be said, is a church.

The continuity of English church history is further illustrated in the arguments made use of by the prelatical party against the Separatists, to one of which we will make reference. We constantly hear it said by clergymen of the Church of England, that disestablishment and disendowment are not to be dreaded for the sake of the church of God, which existed before establishment and endowment, and would survive and might flourish without them ; but that the best interests of the nation would be imperilled. The argument is an honourable one, and is employed, doubtless, with perfect honesty and good feeling. It was made use of by the opponents of Barrowe, Greenwood, and Penry ; it appears in the indictments, and in the speeches for the prosecution. But it appears in a sixteenth century form. "If these men are tolerated," it was said, "the end will be the derogation of the throne and the aristocracy." There is in the proposition a certain narrow political perception ; consequences of a far-reaching character, affecting all the national life, were involved in the controversy. But it reveals a total failure to understand the political problems of the time. The need of England under the Tudors was not the strengthening of the crown and the aristocracy ; but

¹ *Antea.* P. 18.

the education and development of the people. If the prelatical party could have had their way, there would have been no English commonwealth ; but an absolute monarchy, a subservient nobility, and a people held in utter subjection. The conditions perpetuated would have been those of the sixteenth century ; when England was inferior to continental nations in laws and learning, in commerce and agriculture, in the industrial and ornamental arts ; was great only in the military audacity of its population, and in an outburst of swan-like song. The record of history is, that in that crisis of the national life, when the conflict between absolute monarchism and the freedom of the people was emerging ; the prelatical party declared for the monarchy, and the Puritans were partially, the Separatists wholly, for the people. A difference of religious insight determined the part they took in the controversy : the Separatists believed that Christ was exalted to be the head over all things to His church, the king of free-men ; the prelatical party used His name to buttress up decaying institutions.

In the December of 1875, the then Bishop of Winchester wrote thus in a pastoral letter :—"Notwithstanding the great changes from the time of Augustine to the time of Anselm, and then to the time of Cranmer, and still again to our own time, yet no national institution has changed so little as the Church." The statement requires to be taken with considerable qualification ; but in so far as it is true, it refutes the deduction attempted to be drawn from it as to the peculiar nationality of the Established Church. From the time of Augustine to our own time, the whole life of the people, political and social, has greatly changed. The Saxon heptarchy has consolidated into the English nation ; the different races that have colonised our land have been welded into one people ; the feudal system has developed into a democratic monarchy. Personal freedom—the liberty of the individual to direct his power, and use his resources according

to his own choice, the liberty to think for himself and to express his thoughts—has grown up since the time of Cranmer. Free labour, free trade, a free press—these words are the symbols of a fundamental change in the tone of English life, which has expressed itself in successive changes in English institutions. To affirm of any institution that it is substantially the same as in the days of the Tudors is to declare that it has stood apart from the course of English history. In the measure of its changelessness it is not more English, but less English, than other institutions. The continuity of national life appears, not in the survival of its establishments, but in the growth of its thought; it is the identity of spirit shewing itself in fresh adaptation to new demands.

A curiously insular statement has come to be accepted as illuminating by some controversialists; the Church of England to day is declared to be the same, through unbroken succession, with the ancient British church, and so with the church of the apostles. It is only of the Christian life of the whole people that this identity and succession can be affirmed; and of that Christian life Nonconformists are at least as faithful representatives as Established Churchmen. If Churchmen represent the continued effort of rulers to perpetuate forms and institutions; Nonconformists represent the continued effort of believers to get back to the primal source of Christianity, and conform themselves to its teaching. The free spirit of the Christian man plays a part in English history as marked, as worthy of regard, and assuredly as successful, as the purpose of statesmen and ecclesiastics to hinder reformation. The unity and catholicity of the church of God will never be realised by overlooking the place of the free Christian man in ecclesiastical history. The maxim, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, is false in both its historical and doctrinal implications, if it be understood of anything other than the abiding Christian consciousness. The testimony of the Separatists three hundred years ago, and of the

Congregationalists of to day, is that that consciousness is the one note of the church of God.

Historians have remarked on the fact that, in the English Reformation, there was no leader of combined intellectual, moral, and religious force ; no spiritual genius ; no Knox, no Calvin, no Luther. That was, indeed, the significant fact of the story ; its immediate result was the imperfection of the work, its ultimate result has been a grander Reformation. John Robinson, in his farewell to the Pilgrims, when speaking of his confidence that "the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth of his Holy Word," "took occasion also miserably to bewail the state and condition of the reformed churches, who were come to a period in religion." The reason he assigns is that the churches would go no further than the instruments of their reformation. "As for example, the Lutherans, they could not be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw ; for whatever part of God's will he had further imparted and revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And so also you see the Calvinists, they stick where he left them. A misery much to be lamented ; for though they were precious shining lights in their times, yet God had not revealed his whole will to them." When we compare the state of religion in Germany and France and Geneva to day with the state of religion in England and America and the British colonies ; we shall not regret, we may rather rejoice, that God, in His all-wise providence, took the work of Reformation, for this island, from the hands of solitary and conspicuous leaders, and transferred it to humbler men, whom difficulty and danger welded into holy fellowships.

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